

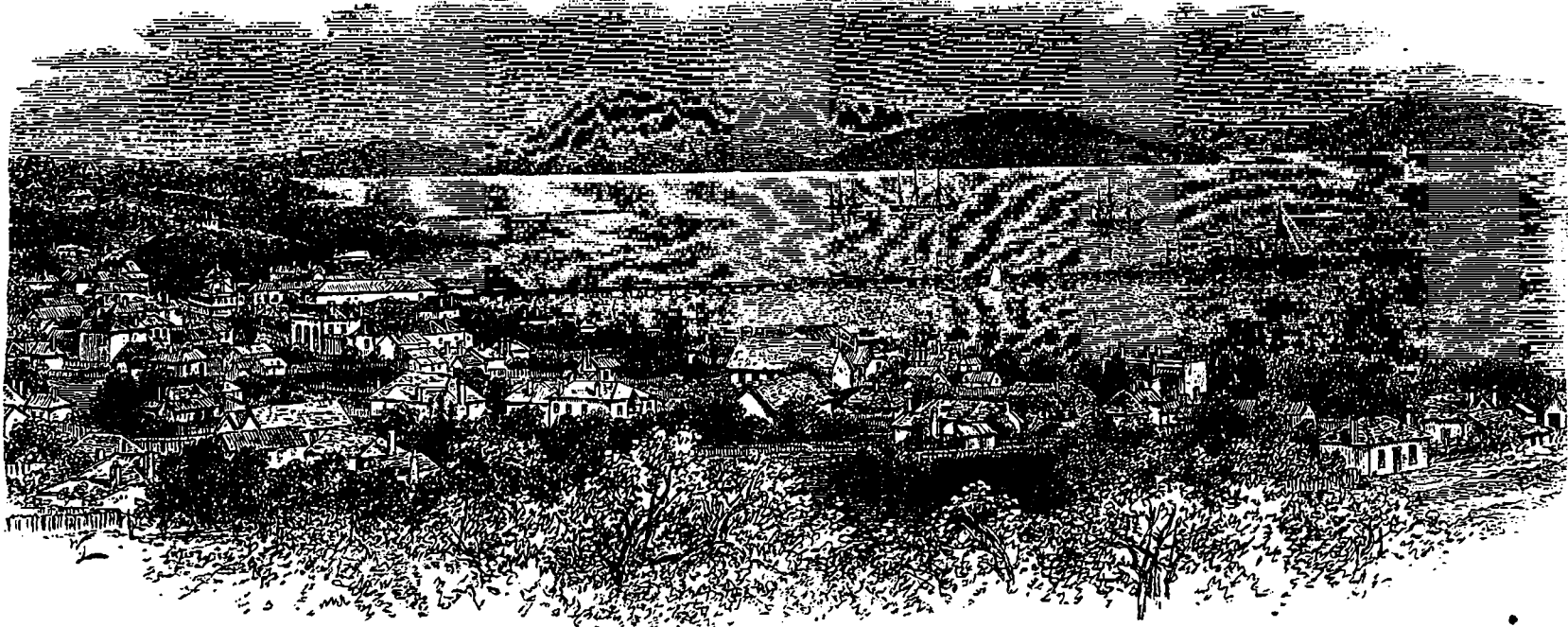
or so off shore, long enough for them to come out with a small boat to take away a goodly store of provisions. We were close enough to get a good view of the island, which is very pretty. It is very low down on the water and covered with a rich tropical vegetation, the cocoanut palm, which abounds, being most conspicuous. It is wonderful indeed, how the tiny coral insects, "little by little," are able to build up an island! A coral island is shaped like a horse-shoe, and, strange to say, the opening is always "to leeward," or the opposite direction from which the prevailing winds blow, the sheltered lagoon in the centre affording excellent protection. Diego Garcia is really a chain of small islands surrounding such a lagoon, of a charming light green hue, in striking contrast to the outer

to and fro—splashed out the water, got in and made off.

The rocky coast line was in view for some time after leaving Aden and was all of the beautiful coloring so characteristic of the Red Sea region. That evening we entered the Red Sea, passing through the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb just at sunset, and a grand sight it was. These straits are sometimes called by mariners the "Gates of Hell," an appellation none too choice, certainly, but significant of the dangers encountered. The well fortified island of Pirim—a British possession—guards the entrance. The Red Sea is an immense body of water, its greatest breadth being 180 miles and its length some 1,200 miles. The color is a lovely blue, the name, probably, being derived from

were really in those historic waters—Arabia on the right, Egypt on the left—countries so rich in historic interest. On the east coast was Jedda, the port of Mecca—the Holy City of the Mahomedans—and on the west Suakim, the site of the recent Egyptian troubles. We could not see either of these places, however, land being quite out of sight when we passed them, though the air was perfectly clear. But for the large number of steamships we met, which had come through the Suez Canal (passed eight in one night), there was nothing to indicate we were within the confines of a narrow sea.

The morning of March 16th we steamed into the Gulf of Suez. The bold, barren, and rugged rocks forming its coast line were in full view, the gulf being only from ten to twenty-five miles in width.



ALBANY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

ocean. Towards evening of the same day another of the Chargos group was sighted.

Some days more sailing brought us to Aden, and in early morning the large and magnificent rock upon which the English fortress is built, was in full view. The rock is of a beautiful shade of reddish brown, and, though perfectly barren, the lights and shadows on its rugged sides and sharp peaks made an impressive and pretty picture. Our ship anchored off some distance from shore for a short interval only. The town was not visible from our anchorage and but very little of the fort—one of England's greatest strongholds.

Aden is to the Red Sea what Gibraltar is to the Mediterranean. Boat-loads of mixed races—principally Arabians and Africans—came out with all sorts of goods to sell, dressed in their native costume; and here we caught our first glimpse of oriental life. While the bartering between these orientals and passengers afforded greatest amusement, the chief source of fun was with the flock of young African boys, who paddled out in their tiny canoes, which they managed most dexterously. They never ceased crying in a monotone, "Have-a-dive-sir," "Have-a-dive-sir," and adding a peculiar laugh or trill reminding me of a lot of bullfrogs. For a threepence thrown into the sea a half-dozen of them or more would jump in after it in a second, leaving canoes and paddles to drift with the tide, but which were easily caught by the amphibious youngsters and soon put to rights. They would also jump from the awning into the sea or swim across under the ship—perfectly fearless of sharks. One little fellow was upset by an elder in a squabble. His canoe, filling with water, floated off; the paddles, too, drifted in another direction; and, to add to the dilemma, he cast off his clothes, which immediately began to sink (the last, by the way, consisted solely of a large handkerchief). As soon as he rose to the surface and took in the situation, he dived first for the sinking clothes. These secured, he swam after the paddle and with it and the handkerchief made after the boat. Righting it was an easy matter, but to get the water out required two hands, hence the paddle and handkerchief were continually slipping away. It was most amusing and interesting to see how cutely he managed to keep the three together, and finally by a cunning manoeuvre—skillfully and rapidly moving the canoe

the reddish color of its coasts. We were two days out of sight of land and for all we could have told might have been in the middle of the Indian Ocean. There is not a vestige of vegetation along its shores; not a river flows into it, though it has over 3,000 miles of coast line. The supply of water, to compensate for the very great evaporation, rushes in through the narrow Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. The water is, of course, much saltier than the outer ocean. There is a deep channel in the middle, but navigation is considered difficult and dangerous owing to the numerous low rocky and coral reef islands along its shores. In this rainless region the heat is sometimes most intense, but we were favored with a pleasant cool breeze, which even made it rough, and in the upper end of the sea too cool. The twilights and evenings in the Red Sea were gorgeous. The stars were visible to the very water's edge, and the phosphorescent light especially brilliant.

We could scarcely bring ourselves to believe we

"On either hand, mountains, table-lands, and bold ridges from three to six thousand feet high, challenged admiration, not only for their picturesque outline, but also for their marvellous coloring."

The wonderful transparency of the atmosphere of this locality admits of seeing a much greater distance than elsewhere possible. Mountains away inland in the Sinai Peninsula were distinctly visible, and the rugged top of the sacred Mount Sinai itself we could clearly see above the coast range. Navigation in the Gulf of Suez is at times very dangerous. We passed two most fearful steamship wrecks—one with the bow standing right up in mid-air.

It was long after dark before the *Lusitania* dropped anchor at Suez, the port at the lower end of the famous and ever busy canal. The lights along shore and of the ships at anchor awaiting turn to pass through made an exceedingly pretty sight. This was the evening of the twenty-fifth day from Adelaide, and here we disembarked, setting foot on *terra firma* for the first time in that period.

