

Ballarat Courier

3<sup>rd</sup> May 1890

“My way is on the bright blue sea,  
My sleep upon the rocky tide.”

-LONG FELLOW

### ON THE LINE

I have a number of mining friends in Ballarat-viz., Messrs Acheson, Bickett, Stoddart, McGovern, Gilpin, Fitzpatrick, Ham, Morey, &c., - who seem to think it a fine thing to be “on the line.” Here, just as I sit down to write, this Saturday afternoon (12<sup>th</sup> April), we are “right on the line,” and my mining friends on board – Messrs Kinsella, Pearce, Curthoys, Goddard, and Hall- don’t seem to be in any excessive glee over it. The fact is, it is intensely warm. The glass has been higher in Melbourne lately, for days, but I hardly think people felt it so warm as we do on board the Ormuz. The Ballaraters to whom I have been speaking lately are agreed that they have never seen Lake Wendouree so calm and rippleless as is the Indian Ocean here on the equator-

The glassy ocean hushed, forgets to roar.

There is not a breath of wind except the current we are ourselves making as we steam along frightening the pretty little flying fish, the only living things we seen outside the ship since we left Albany. The weather has been very favorable, indeed, but it was not pleasant to think of any possible accident arising which might have left a lot of us tossing about in boasts in the midst of that vast ocean, which we have now almost crossed without seeing any vessel of any kind. Day after day, and night after night we have been steaming across the vast expanse, feeling with the poet Campbell-

Earth has not a plain

So boundless or so beautiful as thine;

The eagle’s vision cannot take it in:

The lightening’s wing, too weak to sweep its space,

Sinks half-way o’er it like a wearied bird.

### OFF CEYLON

We will put into Colombo to coal on Monday morning, and will only be a day there. We could easily have got in a day sooner, but I understand that the captain and his colleagues think it better for the health of all to stop as short a time at Ceylon in the hot season as possible, and so we will miss being a Sunday in Ceylon, which I and the most of us, would have liked very much. From my earliest days Ceylon has been

to my fancy the paradise of the world. And so it appears to be to all the personal friends of mine who have been there. Mr Harry Sutton, for instance, on his road to England was absolutely enchanted by the wonderful vegetation, which he has described in the most graphic and poetical language. If circumstances permitted I would indeed be pleased to stop a week or fortnight, where, as Bishop Heber says –

The spicy breezes  
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle.  
Where every prospect pleases,  
And only man is vile.

But it cannot be, and perhaps I can only hope to win an interview with Arabi Pasha, whom, to the eternal honor of England, the Jingoës were not permitted to hang. I and my mate, Mr Hall, mean to make the most of our short stay in Colombo, and I will report thereon from Aden. We are all very eager, indeed, to reach Colombo, if only to obtain a fresh supply of fruit and vegetables from what is held to have been the first home of man, and the original Eden of creation.

## EDEN

I am not quite sure as to whether, in any previous writings, I have alluded to the Vedaic account of the Creation. To me it has long been a very interesting story, and it is doubly interesting to me now as we are nearing the scene. I will try to give the gist of it as I related it to a number of passengers on the Ormuz. Well, thousands of years ago the Hindoos in their Vedas told the story of how God created the world, and how he placed the first man and woman, Adami and Heva, in Ceylon, the Eden of the earth, the "Pearl of the Seas," where everything that they needed grew in the greatest perfection and profusion, and where he only required the pair to stay and be as happy as every day was long. But it was not so to be; for, as the Hindoos have it, Adami was not able to sit down thoroughly satisfied. He explored very carefully the Eden of Ceylon, round and round and through and through, and began to desire a wider field, especially when he discovered that a very narrow path of land (now known as Adam's Bridge) connected his Eden with the distant hazy mainland. The more that Adam looked at the path, and the far land, the more did distance lend enchantment to the view, just as a silver mine at the Broken Hill has greater enchantment for a Ballarat man than a Star of the East in Sebastopol, or a Britannia in Ballarat East. Well, Adam talked the thing over and over again to Heva, and coaxed her to cross over to the mainland with him to see what it was like, and to settle down there if they liked the country better. But Heva, like the good, sensible woman that she was, would not hear of such a thing. She preferred the substance to the shadow. She knew when they were well off – a thing that man don't always know. Thus she reasoned – "No, no, Adam; what good can we possibly have elsewhere that we have not here? Besides, will not God have great reason to be angry at our ingratitude in disobeying Him by leaving Eden in which he has placed us?" This was here woman's way of looking at the matter; but Adami was not satisfied with such arguments and the upshot was that he suggested he would just have a run across, and leave Heva behind, and then he would come back and tell her all about the strange scenes and wonderful things he

had met across the sea. "No Adami," said Heva, "You must not go without me! Where you go I will go! You want me to look after you; for a man by himself is a poor helpless creature. Besides, Adami, I could not live here without you, and if you will persist in your folly, I must persist in sharing it." It was not long before Adami and Heva set forth on the narrow path – the child-man with elated confidence, the child-woman with anxious hesitancy. It was a lovely morning, lovely even for Ceylon. Adami had sufficient forethought to take with him a bunch of bananas, and he was peeling one and throwing away the skin, when he and Heva heard for the first time a clap of thunder, and then for the first time the sudden growth of a tropical tempest. Heva clung to Adami for protection, and he himself felt helpless indeed, totally ignorant, as he was, of this terrific phenomena of nature. But presently they heard a voice exclaim from the cloud which covered them, and from amidst the thunder and forked lightning. Thus exclaimed the voice: "Disobedient ones; why left you the Paradise in which I placed you, and where you had all your needs profusely supplied? Ingrates, ye shall rue your disobedience." Oh, blame not the woman!" exclaimed the manly man. "She tried her every hardest to persuade me against leaving the lovely island in which we were so happy. I alone am to blame, and on me along let the punishment fall. As for myself, I wanted to learn all about the wonderful world which you, Adorable Being, have created, and I wanted to see life in all its may phases, and to do that I hungered to explore yonder land!" "Have, then, thy wish," exclaimed the Great Voice, "and as it ever will be with thy posterity, let thy wishes be thy reward or thy punishment, as thy may be good or evil. Go onward, now; and on yon mainland learn to earn your living by the sweat of your brow. Wed your labor to the land, and the land will repay your toil so long you and your descendants do not permit, hereafter, and others to monopolise your right to the fee use of the soil. I banish you from Eden, but not in anger, for you have proved yourself a noble fellow. The work will make you a better man, and Heva will be none the worse for doing a bit of weeding now and then, after she has finished the cooking and fixed up the cabin, which you must build to protect you at night against the wild beasts and the wild storms. All that will cause you to exert your intellectual faculties, which might have rusted in idleness, and you and Heva will be all the better able to enjoy life, when in suffering you've learned to be strong, and when you have learned the luxury of doing good." Adami and Heva saw the path behind them washed away by the tempest, and with no choice but to push forward, on they went; Adami blaming himself for taking Heva from the home where she was so happy, and Heva, like a true little woman, telling him to cheer up, and they would be so very, very happy in the new country which lay all before them where to choose. Such, I understand, is the gist of the story of creation as told in Ceylon, the original Eden, which we will see so soon; and so the story seems to me to be somewhat appropriated though rather lengthy.

### **SELF AND OTHERS**

It is not easy thing to write on board such a vessel as the Ormuz, unless one happens to be a saloon passenger, which I am not. I have to keep wandering about like a hen that is very anxious to lay a big egg, looking for a suitable spot; for though the purser and stewards are very obliging, and offer to accommodate me all they can, still they cannot make the atmosphere less oppressive in the quiet nooks, nor can I expect them

to clear the people away from the cool convenient places, and so I must e'en take my chances here and there, and say what I can how I can. Perhaps, I had better say that after leaving Albany, and with an eleven days' unbroken journey ahead of us, I resolved to have, what I felt I wanted badly, a three or four days' complete rest. I threw care away, with the result I did not take care of myself, and so, in the many sudden transitions of temperature, I found myself fixed up with a very pronounced fit of asthma, just when I was beginning to fancy I was invulnerable to illness of any kind on board ship. It is said that that it is worth while to have the toothache to experience the pleasure of being cured of it, and if one, when well, has been doing what he could to help the sick around him, it is really worth his while to get sick himself to notice all the kind little offers and offices from young and old. I really was not very bad; the chief thing was I could not eat or sleep for several days, and my coughing was a little distressing. I had any amount of attendance and attention from Mr Helvey, the paragon of pursers, who seems to be intent on giving my vegetarian principles the severest test by causing our steward, Mr Vink, to provide me with the choicest dainties. Mr Hall has also helped me well over the bout, as did Mr Tom Kinsella, of Stawell, who seem to me to have rather a weakness for sick people. He has been looking after old Joe Frost, of Stawell, as if he had all his fortune rested on Joe's health; and I know how Joe feels about it, for we are a good deal together. Mr Joe Frost may not be very well known in Ballarat, but in Stawell, where he has been a member of the mining board for fifteen years, he is an institution in his way, and his way is a somewhat exceptional one, for though a miner for thirty-five years in Stawell, he never did a day's work for another man. I do not wonder that a man like Tom Kinsella should have such a very genuine regard for a modest, quiet man like Joe Frost, who is now on his way to his native London after a lapse of more than half a lifetime. I think Joe will be alright now, for Mr Kinsell got the purser to take him in hand, and he will want for nothing that the ship can supply. I have no doubt he will be all the better of his illness in the end. All the Ballarat contingent, who are all in fine health and spirits, did not forget to make friendly calls and enquire as to my own health, and it is to be hoped we will be all as right as an eight-day clock from this out, even in going through the Red Sea, where possibly some will be able to point out the exact spot where Pharoah and his hosts were drowned so very long ago.

### **THE REPERTORY**

There are people who say to me, "What can you possibly see to write about on board the Ormuz, with no even a whale, a shark, or an albatross in view, and with the same routine life from day to day?" In reply, I hold that the Ormuz is a vast repertory of subjects. Speak to any man or woman for five minutes, and you will find that thereby will hang a tale. Even in Ballarat, where one gets to think one knows the people so well, one does not seem to know them really so well as on board ship where we are necessarily brought into close quarters and observant proximity. And the best of it is, the nearer you see the most of these people, the more you get to like them, with very rare exceptions. From the Davie the Fool to the captain, everyone is a subject, and may very well indeed have a bunch of stories attached to him. Every day on board the Ormuz, is, after all, merely a faithful reflex of a day in a British town. We have the same preaching, the same religious exercises, the same concerts, the same dancing,

the same fancy dress balls, the same debating, the same gambling, and almost the same sports, excluding horse-racing, of course. My very good friend, Mr Wm. King, would be delighted to hear the way "Scots wae hae" and other favorites of his, are rendered by a choir in the third class. Some are evidently members of the Adelaide Caledonian Society, for their music has the Caledonian brand on it. Their conductor is a very nice and able man, but it seems to me the little choir wants an energetic conductor like King to bring them out more, and then the Ormuz would become famous for its harmony. It is true that Dr Johnson defined life on board ship as "imprisonment, with the chance of getting drowned," but Dr Johnson knew nothing of live on an Orient steamship. Were he on board the Ormuz he would find plenty to enjoy, and plenty to set him thinking; and, oh, were Oliver Goldsmith to be with "Burly Sam," what delightful additions we might have to "The Citizen of the World!" Even I, as I look around me, can see a story in almost every face, and a subject for grave thought in many a passing incident. Perhaps the best thing I can do is just to tell tales on my shipmates.