

Extracted from "*Six Months In Ascension: An Unscientific Account of a Scientific Expedition*"
by Mrs. Gill, London, 1878.

On and on, the great ship rushed through the waters; the bells struck the passing hours, and every noon the answer to the anxious question, "What's the run?" told of nearly 300 miles further on our way. At last on the 1st of July, at 4 a.m., the screw suddenly stopped, and I knew and rejoiced that we were in the Bay of James Town.

At the first peep of dawn I hurried on deck and saw, so close to the ship as to make me start, dark sterile rocks rising almost perpendicularly from the sea, and partly enclosing the bright blue bay in which we were anchored. At the bottom of a strange cleft in these fierce, fortress-looking crags, a quiet little town nestled close to the sea, filling up the lap of a valley scarce 200 yards wide.

Here was the landing-stage, and just beyond, a row of dark Peepul trees fringed the shore, shading and cooling the cluster of low, white houses that we were so blithe to see. Besides these, little or no vegetation appeared. The great towering rocks were cold and bare. A long ladder of 600 steps sprang from the town up the steep western side, called Ladder Hill, and at the top I thought I could descry some forts and the grim mouths of cannon.

St. Helena can hardly be mentioned, much less looked upon, without memories of Napoleon crowding upon us, and I wondered, as I suppose everybody does on seeing the island, how the first sight of these grim CH. II, Landing at St. Helena. 23 prison walls had affected the man who seemed to find the world too small for him?

But this was no time to speculate on questions of by-gone history. The present was urgent, and suddenly remembering the terrible chaos in my cabin, and boxes still unpacked, I gave up dreaming and set to work. How very easy it is to pull things out of a box, and how difficult to get them into it again, especially in a space 7 feet long by 3 broad!

The Governor's Secretary was already on board, having kindly come off thus early to advise David about landing and stowing away his numerous cases. At Lord Lindsay's kind instigation. Lord Carnarvon had previously sent despatches, requesting assistance for him in this and other matters; and for the timely help thus given we were most grateful.

That lovely Sunday morning the bay was smooth and bright as a mirror, without a trace of the dreaded rollers, so that we and all our delicate impedimenta came safely and easily to shore. The Governor's pony carriage was on the wharf, and while David counted and sorted out his goods, I was driven up a short incline to the Castle, where I waited for him comfortably in the large cool rooms.

Here I occupied myself in watching for the return of four gentlemen, our fellow-passengers, who had set out soon after daybreak for Napoleon's tomb, in the interior of the island. They were still missing, although the Balmoral Castle was getting up steam; and the Captain, kind as he was, would be off the moment the ship was ready to sail. That moment arrived; and just as the ship's bows were disappearing round the rocky headland, a single figure rushed frantically upon the pier, and next minute a white handkerchief was floating from an oar. Would the good ship see this flag of distress and put back? Yes. With the help of a telescope, I was watching events from an upper window in the Castle, and rejoiced when this "derelict" was saved.

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But there were still three unlucky ones to be sorry for. And, as first the bows, gradually the long white hull, and finally the Union Jack on the stern disappeared, I felt that their case was hopeless; and so it proved. By-and-by other hurrying figures were seen to pull off in pursuit, but only to return disappointed, doomed to five weeks' captivity on St. Helena. We sympathized deeply with them, especially after we had seen the "Imperial Arms",¹ where they must take up their abode, and noted the dull, dead-looking street which forms James Town. A street of rickety, blistered houses and of dusty ant-eaten shops, with untidy and un-tempting goods therein displayed, and closed in, almost to suffocation, by rocks on either side.

The ground rises quickly from the shore, and as we drove slowly along, a curious mixture of faces crowded at the open doors and windows. All shades were there, from the woolly, jet-black Hottentot to the fair-complexioned English sailor, leaning against the doorpost of the "Royal Banner"², with "H.M.S. Cygnet" on the ribbon round his cap. After a short stiff pull, we left this motley crew behind, and a shady lane soon led us into a lovely garden where palm and pomegranate trees shaded the rich luxuriance of sweet-smelling roses and scarlet geraniums. A low-roofed verandahed cottage formed the centre of this little Eden, and here we found a comfortable home during our stay.

No sooner was our baggage safely landed, than David began to make inquiries about the Observatory on Ladder Hill and the best mode of access to it. It was in this Observatory that Johnson, about fifty years ago, made his catalogue of southern stars; and as its longitude had been determined with considerable accuracy by that astronomer, my husband was anxious to connect it by means of his chronometers with Ascension, and thus strengthen the results for the longitude, which he might get at Ascension, from observations of the moon. For this purpose it was necessary that the chronometers should be conveyed to the Observatory, that local time should be determined there morning and evening by observations with the reflecting circle, and that careful comparison of the chronometers should be made every day.

Ladder Hill rises about 600 feet above sea level and forms the western side of the valley in which James Town lies. There are two ways of getting to the top—the one by means of the ladder I have already mentioned, the other by a very zig-zag carriage road, which winds along the side of the hill. It was by the latter way that the instruments were conveyed by some gunners, through the kindness of Captain Oliver, R.A.; and David's next business was to hire a strong little Cape horse to carry him up the same road every morning and evening on his visits to the Observatory.

I say Observatory—alas! it is so no longer. Fallen from its high estate, it is now the artillery mess-room, and in the recesses formed for the shutters of the openings through which Johnson's transit used to peep, they stow wineglasses and decanters, and under the dome they play billiards! It may appear ungrateful to speak so of a change which was productive of so much kindness and hospitality to us; I do not grudge the hospitable St. Helena Mess their mess-room, but I do regret that so fine a site for an Observatory is vacant.

¹ We do not know where this 'hotel' was situated. Nothing exists by this name today.

² We believe this was in lower Market Street; no longer a pub.

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Another kind friend and sympathizer in his work, my husband found in the Governor, Mr. Janisch. An enthusiastic amateur in astronomy, a descendant of the great astronomer Encke, born on the island and spending his whole life there, he had never before met an astronomer, and the welcome he gave was warm and cordial.

Indeed Mr. Janisch had so much to urge in favour of St. Helena as an observing station for Mars, that he had almost tempted us to remain; and when we saw the clear cloudless sky, night after night begemmed with stars, there did creep into our minds a doubt of meteorological statistics, and a fear lest in going further we might fare worse. But the risk must not be run. Had all succeeded here, well and good, and probably my husband would have been congratulated on his change of plan, but had bad weather come and failure resulted, there would always have remained the reflection – "Why didn't I go to Ascension?"

Before entering upon the work that we had left England to do, it was a kind chance that took us for a holiday to St. Helena. Tired of anxious preparation and the constant thinking of one thought, it was no real loss of time to turn aside for a rest by the way, and gather fresh strength from fresh scenes and from the most delightful air it is possible to imagine.

During our week's stay we were able to make three excursions on horseback from James Town, and these little peeps into the country showed me so much that was strange and new, that I find it difficult to disentangle one impression from another. So quickly did they follow in succession, that the one partly effaced the other before time had allowed it to harden on the mind, and the picture memory has to show is somewhat blotted and confused.

The sun had been shining some hours on the hill tops, and was just beginning to creep down the dark rocks into the valley when we started for our first excursion. Captain Oliver had kindly offered to be our guide to Diana's Peak, the hill 'par excellence of St. Helena, and towards it we now wended our way southwards and upwards. A narrow bridle-path, curling itself among aloes and wild geraniums, soon brought us to "The Briars", where Napoleon spent the first month of his imprisonment.

It is a pleasantly situated house, within view of the sea at one point, but on all other sides so shut in by steep rocks that I wondered how we were to proceed.

The path, however, gradually opened up as we wound round the hills, and new beauties burst upon us at every turning. Now a sudden bird's-eye view of the little town, looking like a cluster of card houses far below; now a ribbon of clear water breaking into feathery spray as it falls over the steep cliff; here and there a group of goats or shaggy calves giving life to the picture; and on every bit of level ground some pretty white villa with its trim garden relieving the wildness of the scene. Straight-limbed aloes were shaking their feathery blossoms thirty feet overhead, and homelier flowers were creeping humbly round their stems. The snow-white blossoms of the beautiful moon-plant (*Brugmansia siiaveolens*) scented the air.

The Hottentot fig (*Mesenibryantmum edule*) trailed its delicate starry flowers among the dark leaves of the yam. The knarled cabbage-tree (*Aster gummiferus*), the castor-oil tree, Port Jackson willows and graceful acacias

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mingled their shades of green with the deep red blossoms of the wild fuchsia and the pale yellow of the rock-rose (*Hibiscus arenatiis*).

Winding along the upward path, we came to a gap in the ridge of hill through which burst upon us a glorious view of the southern coast. For the first time in my life I saw the naked grandeur of volcanic action, undimmed by time, un-softened by vegetation. Wild grotesque masses of rock, assuming every shape and aspect, were piled up, one above the other, with fantastic irregularity, and tinted like the opal by the noonday sun. Beyond lay the sea, of a deep blue where it bordered the rocks, but gradually becoming softened in colour by the shadow of a great white cloud far away in the horizon.

The scene was altogether so unlike anything I had ever conceived to be among the beauties of the world, that I could have imagined myself somewhere in space and looking down on one of those gorgeous, fairy clouds that we sometimes see floating in the summer sky after a thunderstorm – masses of colour, gloriously bright with the brightness of the setting sun, then soft and tender as he bids them farewell, and finally dark and sad-hued, mourning the death of the great painter.

Such is Sandy Bay on the south coast of St. Helena, or rather, such is it as I am able to describe it. A rift in the ridge had shown us this glorious picture; presently the rock towered above us again, and we saw it no more. Indeed I saw little landscape of any kind about this point, for the path had got so ugly that I shut my eyes and ignominiously grasped the pommel of my saddle. To make matters worse, I had been told that the pony I rode was a "buck-jumper", and I could not help wondering what would be the consequence should he take it into his head to exhibit any of his feats just at this moment. But this bit of nervous riding was short, and fortunately my courage was able to hold out until we came upon a more level road. About a hundred yards below the Peak we tied our ponies to one of the numerous gates that are placed along the pathway to prevent the straying of cattle, and climbed on foot to the top.

Here we could command at a glance the entire length and breadth of the little island, as well as the unbroken circle of sea surrounding it. To the north lay James Town, hidden in its narrow valley; to the south, Sandy Bay with its chaos of wonderful rocks throwing out their grand outlines against sea and sky.

One of these detached rocks is no less than 1,444 feet in height. It is an upright precipitous mass of greenish grey phonolite, known by the name of "Lot", and "Lot's Wife" stands near him, a fit mate in size and beauty. To the eastward we looked down on a gentler bit of landscape. Here lies the only large tract of cultivated land on St. Helena; and the square green fields, farmhouses, and little church perched on a wooded knoll in the background, took us in fancy back to England.

It was towards this side of the island that we began our descent from the Peak, through fuchsias, blackberries and ferns of all kinds—from the gigantic tree-fern to the tiny *Acrostichum hlfurcatum*, creeping shyly into nooks, as if it were ashamed of the big name which botanists have given to it. In one or two places we noticed the curious grass-like *Polypodium marginellum* growing parasitically on the tree-fern, and here too, choked, alas! and laid waste, are still to be seen some plants of cinchona, which our Government began to cultivate on St. Helena by the advice of Sir Joseph

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Hooker. The plants flourished well while care was given to them; but this is no longer done— a neglect much to be deplored.

The downward road was more level and less fatiguing than the path we had followed in coming up.

Nevertheless we were glad to dismount for rest and refreshment at the "Rose and Crown"³, the only house of entertainment on the island, except, of course, the hotels of James Town; and, together with its landlord, it was by no means the least curious thing we had met with in our day's ride. Tom Timm, his dusky face aglow with heat, and the extraordinary excitement of three guests all in one day, rushed out, napkin on arm, with the welcome greeting that luncheon was ready. A long, uncarpeted, un-ceiled room was the *salle-a-manger*, with bunches of stags'-moss adorning the bare rafters, and on the walls were many works of art, oil dark and mysterious-looking enough to be "Old Masters". But Tom himself was bright and by no means mysterious. He most good-naturedly entertained me with his stock of local gossip, while Captain Oliver and David strolled along to "Halley's Mount" to search for the site of the Observatory where Halley, in 1677, made his catalogue of Southern stars and observed the Transit of Mercury. We did not know whether any record of this work remained in stone and lime, and it was a pleasant surprise to find, on the spot that an astronomer's eye at once picked out as the most favourable, a bit of low wall, duly oriented, and overrun with wild pepper (*Cluytia pulchella*). This had been the Observatory without doubt; and near to it is a quarry from which the stones for its erection had evidently been taken. So charmed was my husband with this interesting record of the work of 200 years ago, that his investigations and surmises regarding it left us short time to linger in the little hollow lying near the foot of Halley's Mount.

Napoleon's tomb is here. It is a lovely spot that the great General chose for his last resting-place, close by the clear spring that used so often to refresh him after his walk from Longwood, over a mile distant. We found the place under charge of a French sergeant, and almost over-trim in its exquisite neatness. A plain iron railing encloses a plot of mossy grass, shaded by cypress, willow and other sombre trees, and an inner rail, round which climb bright geraniums, protects the tomb itself. An ancient-looking, leafless willow hangs over it, but this is not the original willow as I had fondly hoped. That has been ruthlessly hacked to pieces long since by relic-hunters, and this lineal descendant, though better protected, already looks tattered and forlorn, and will, no doubt, soon die the death of its predecessor. With a view to this fate indeed, a younger willow has been planted close by to take the place of honour when the present tree falls.

Relic-hunters are the Goths of the age, and something of their savage nature must be in me, for there was no resisting the impulse to gather a few leaves from the geraniums which wreath the empty tomb.

St. Helena is so rich in associations of Napoleon the Great, that one breathes them in with the air, and infected for the time with the insanity of hero-worship, we can hardly escape the relic mania.

Another day we visited Longwood Old House, where the term of Napoleon's imprisonment was spent, and where he died. The house stands in the interior of the island, on a somewhat bleak and treeless plateau, 2,000 feet above

³ Near where the Hutt's Gate Store now stands but no longer functioning and probably demolished. The present-day "Rose & Crown" is a shop in Jamestown.

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the sea. To reach it, we followed the carriage- road which winds up the eastern slope of James Town Valley, Now north, now south, this corkscrew road led us, now facing the sea, then turning to the land-so that I lost all idea of direction.

But I had confidence in our ten-year-old guide, who kept pace with us by twisting his hand into my pony's tail and so pulling himself along,-a universal practice, which says much for the ingenuity of the "Yam Stalks" (St. Helena natives), and for the good temper of their horses.

Arrived at Longwood, we left the ponies under charge of our guide, and opening a little wicket, we walked through a short garden-path to the door of the low rambling house, where a sad-faced woman received us politely and conducted us over the different rooms, telling us what had been the use of each. The English and French flags are crossed over the fireplace in the entrance hall or "salon a fumer", and the room contains nothing besides.

Immediately beyond is the room where Napoleon died, its only ornament being a laurel-crowned marble bust, standing on the spot where he breathed his last. All the rooms are in good repair, but unfurnished, and smelling of disuse.

The woman in charge told us that formerly all French sailors visiting St. Helena used to be marched up to Longwood House, but the place so excited their quick imaginations that they became quite wild, and they have now been prohibited from visiting it. They exhibited their enthusiasm chiefly by chipping pieces from the door-posts and stripping the paper from the walls. Nor have English travellers been guiltless of aiding in this work of destruction.

Mellis says,

"A remarkable instance occurred of this bad habit of relic-stealing being turned to good account. It was wished that the rooms might be made to look as much as possible like what they had been when occupied by Napoleon; but a great difficulty arose about the wall-papers. Not a scrap nor a vestige of them remained, and no clue could be obtained as to their design or colour. This difficulty reached the ears of an English officer who had visited Longwood thirty years before and carried off a scrap of paper from each room. These specimens, which had been carefully preserved, he at once placed at the disposal of the French engineer in charge of the work, who sent them to Paris, where new papers exactly resembling the originals were manufactured and sent out to St. Helena."

Close by Longwood Old House stands Longwood New House, built for Napoleon, but never occupied by him. It was not completed until shortly before his death, and he refused to move into it, notwithstanding its superior accommodation. In the same cluster of buildings there is also the cottage which was occupied by Marshal Bertrand during his attendance on Napoleon.

It now serves as the dwelling-house of Longwood Farm, which we had already admired from Diana's Peak. Having previously received a kind intimation that the farmer would gladly show whatever might be of interest to us, we now took advantage of this proffer to ride across the fields with him, and see the different agricultural operations that were going on. From this and the neighbouring farm, "Teutonic Hall", come the chief supplies of

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James Town. This is due to the energy and skill of two English farmers, who, with their families, have turned to good account the rich soil of decomposed lava, which is ready and willing to yield food for man and beast.

But farming in St. Helena, as well as farming at home, has many drawbacks to contend against. The last crop of potatoes had been entirely lost through want of rain, not enough having been saved for seed, which had to be brought from England at great cost.

Then, worst of all, is the want of a market for cattle.

Since Christmas, fat cattle had been ready at Longwood Farm for shipment, and no ship had come to take them. All this must be taken into account as well as the very high price of labour; 2s. 6d. a day being the usual hire of a farm labourer, and the "Yam Stalks" do not work with the energy of Englishmen. But they are obedient, and, once set a going, go steadily on like machines. In Scotland we should characterize them as "eident" –un-translateable into English; but "slowly and surely industrious" gives some idea of the meaning.

Here for the first time we saw the light-coloured island partridges flying over the garden-like fields, which are separated from each other by hedges of cacti and scarlet geraniums. How gay it was! The bright sunshine, the bright flowers and fields, the golden-winged canaries flitting hither and thither, darting in and out of the hedgerows, their sweet notes almost drowned in the husky whirr of the grasshoppers.

Our third excursion was made, as the first had been under guidance of Captain Oliver, and with the pleasant addition of another artillery officer and his wife. This time our guide led us into the western and most beautiful part of the island. Another cork-screw road drew us slowly to the top of Ladder Hill, and then we cantered pleasantly along by Friar's Valley – so called from a curious rock of dark basalt here, which is supposed to resemble a cloaked and hooded friar, who suffered as a renegade on the spot where it stands.

The legend tells us that:

"The place where the Friar Rock now stands was once the site of a church, adjoining which was the residence of the officiating priest, who was looked upon as a model of Christian piety, passing his life in acts of charity and benevolence. Blessing and blessed, this man of God pursued his way, until he allowed himself to be enthralled by the wonderful beauty of a mountain girl who dwelt near his home. It was in one of his rambles on some charitable mission, that the ill-fated friar first saw this lovely shepherdess tending her father's goats on the adjacent hill, now called 'Goat Pound Ridge'. They had strayed so far that she had vainly tried to collect them and was returning home, tired and sad, when she met the monk, to whom she told her tale and begged his assistance. It was given, and the scattered flocks soon collected, but more evil than good was done. It would have been well for the good friar if this meeting had been the last, but fate ordained it otherwise. Again and again he sought the mountain hut with a tale of love, and finally besought the maiden to be his bride. She promised, but on one condition – he must renounce his creed and become of her faith. The struggle was a strong and fearful one in the heart of the monk, but 'Love must still be lord of all.' He forsook the faith of

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his fathers, broke his vows and became a renegade. In the course of time the wedding-day arrived; the bride, accompanied by her attendant maidens, had approached the altar, the ceremony was proceeding, and just as the bridegroom was clasping the hand of his beloved, a fearful crash resounded, the rock was rent asunder, and every vestige of the chapel and of those within it disappeared for ever, leaving in its place the gaunt figure of the grim friar. A warning, says the moral, to those who suffer passion to stifle conscience."

Such is the story of the unhappy monk—I wonder what geologists think of it!

The surface of this part of the island reminded me somewhat of a honey-comb, into the cells of which we now and again descended, finding always at the bottom some pretty villa, nestling among acacias, or a white farmhouse standing in fields black with rich mould washed from the encircling hills. Sometimes our road left the cells below and wound along their turf-covered ridges, thus allowing us to obtain a fairly good idea of the general topography of the country.

I have the vaguest notion of how many miles we might have ridden along this zig-zag, up-hill-and-down-dale road. I only know that after three or four hours of it, I did not object to halt at West Lodge for our picnic luncheon, which Captain Oliver, with kind forethought had despatched, donkey-borne, early in the morning.

A gloomy, half-ruined and haunted house is West Lodge, but all around it is bright, and smiling vistas of wooded knolls and flower-clad dales stretch far away among the hills. Beautiful ferns embellish every nook of the half-wild garden, and here and there along the paths are stationed great camellia trees with a stately burden of crimson and white flowers.

But this was only one of the many pretty country residences which we observed tenantless and in a state of rum. Naturally these signs of a decreasing population made us look about for an explanation, and several reasons presented themselves.

Formerly almost all vessels coming from the East called at St. Helena for fresh provisions, &c., and it might be reckoned that a thousand ships a year, in former times, cast anchor in James Bay. But now they make swifter passages, and can easily accomplish a voyage from the East to Europe without an intermediate stoppage. This, with the opening of the Suez Canal, has reduced the number of ships calling at St. Helena by nearly one-half.

Then the garrison is greatly reduced, and many of the civil offices have been abolished, the line of policy pursued by the Home Government towards St. Helena being characterized by a somewhat ruthless economy. Plantation House is the official residence of the Governor, but he finds it more convenient to occupy his private house in James Town, and owing to reduced salaries on all sides, even Plantation House has not quite escaped the infection of general decay. But nothing can rob it of its beautiful surroundings. A square compact mass of building, of no architectural pretensions, it stands facing a beautiful park, dotted with groups of trees of innumerable shapes and shades of colour. Below the park are the famous gardens, containing fruit trees, and tropical and sub-tropical plants in such wonderful variety, that all our time in St. Helena, and more, would have been needed to examine them thoroughly.

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On a rising ground behind Plantation House, the little cathedral of the island peeps from amid a grove of magnificent cypress trees, which dwarf its tiny spire, and, with their sombre masses dark against the pale blue sky, form a perfect background to the view as we saw it, riding home from West Lodge in the twilight.

But perhaps the most beautiful of all St. Helena's beautiful homes is Oakbank, the residence of the Bishop. I cannot recall a more lovely spot. Nature seems to have denied nothing to this pet child of hers, and Art has helped her gracefully, controlling without thwarting her. When we were there, the oak trees, from which it takes its name, were leafless, and their naked arms, interlacing with the bright green boughs of neighbour trees which acknowledge no winter, dashed the forest picture with great streaks of grey; and the rustle of withered leaves under our horses' hoofs was a homely, autumnly sound.

Oakbank is the queen of pocket landscapes, but in every gully here, little gems lie hid that would • delight a painter's eye, and the variety of scenery within so small a compass is indeed wonderful. Grand rugged rocks, gentle, grassy slopes, tilled fields and hedgerows, gardens of palms and pomegranates, beds of violets and mignonette, clumps of pine trees, waysides of gorse, and everywhere the sea. All this St. Helena showed us in a week. No wonder then that we found it a happy one, and that we brought away with us bright memories to think and talk over among the barren rocks at Ascension.

On Monday the 9th the Cape steamer was due, and, learning caution from the fate of our laggard fellow passengers on board the Balmoral Castle, we held ourselves in readiness from daybreak. These unfortunate gentlemen we had met with several times during our ramblings, and they really seemed to bear their misfortunes bravely, making good use of their unexpected time on St. Helena.

We subsequently heard that the one whose business at the Cape was the most pressing had been taken on board a troop-ship, that called shortly after we left.

The Captain would not be induced to take the others owing to the already crowded state of the ship; but one of them, careless of all consequences, surreptitiously stowed himself on board. The third, from feelings of self-respect, decided not to have recourse to this plan, and he probably fared all the better for his decision. Just as the troop-ship was under way, the mail-steamer from the Cape, bringing the various effects of these unfortunates, entered the harbour, and thus missed two of them by a few minutes. The one who had remained behind, no doubt felt his virtue rewarded, and so charmed was he with St. Helena, now that his purse and wardrobe had been restored to him, that he resolved to enjoy himself there for a few weeks longer.

It was the morning of the 10th before the call came for us. At 7 A.M. the Edinburgh Castle was signalled, and some hours later we went on board, accompanied by a large party of the kind friends who had given us such warm welcome to St. Helena, and whose hospitality had added so much to the pleasure of our visit.

We were loth to say good-bye. From the Governor we parted with great regret, and we shall always retain the strongest feeling of gratitude for the sympathy and assistance he gave us in our work. Certainly while Mr. Janisch

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is Governor of St. Helena, any astronomer visiting the island will find a zealous supporter and a kind friend.

With so many St. Helena friends on board we did not feel as if we had quite said "good-bye", till a noisy, impatient bell rang for the third time. Then last hand-shakings were given, hats and handkerchiefs waved, and as little boats pushed back to the wharf, we steamed into wider waters, gradually losing sight of those "grey beetling crags" which hide so much softness and beauty. No thunderbolts nor lightning shafts, no burning drought nor deadly disease, no savage brute nor noxious reptile, not even a lawyer; surely this St. Helena, now melting away in the distance, must be the "The Island of the Blessed" so fondly believed in and so earnestly sought for by the ancient mariners.