

LESSONS LEARNED  
ABROAD.

R. 8

The Spread of the Eucalyptus

I.—By Frederic Wood-Jones.

Ismail the Khedive, son of Ibrahim, had a nice genius for extravagance, and it is well that it was so, for the man who, during an administration of no more than 10 years, could raise the national debt from three to a hundred millions sterling was bound to need more money sooner or later. Ismail needed money, and to raise some of it he sold his shares in the Suez Canal to Great Britain. That in itself was all to the good, but Ismail did more than that, he threw Egypt open for foreign enterprise. Among the horde of European speculators that fattened on his Oriental lavishness the great majority were thorough-going rogues, but there were also some honest men, and these proposed to take in hand the construction of the Egyptian State Railways. It is said that when the engineers consulted Ismail concerning the gauge of the railroad to be laid, he had no hesitation. It was not only in expenditure that the Khedive had large ideas, and for him there was no doubt on his head—the gauge for his railways must be the same as that employed in South Africa. To see the Cape linked to Cairo by a railroad of uniform gauge was an easy thing to this strange man that the world was so soon to name as the curse of his country. In this little matter of the gauge of his railways it may be that Ismail the Khedive is not without his interest to Australia; but for every Australian the story of the royal spendthrift has another lesson.

Royal in his munificence, Ismail knew how royalty should be entertained. He had been the guest of Queen Victoria, he had charmed most of the crowned heads of Europe, and in November, 1869, he was to show France how he could entertain her Empress when Eugenie made royal passage in the opening of the Suez Canal. Everything was made beautiful for her visit: labour was abundant and cheap since the Khedive had the habit of impressing the labour and leaving the labour unrequited. Avenues of beautiful trees were planted to charm the royal lady, and it is in this way Ismail forged his link with Australia.

Some 10 years before the day when the great vision of De Lesseps was realized some eucalyptus seeds had been brought to the shores of the Mediterranean; the gum trees of Australia were finding a new home in southern Europe and northern Africa. These trees the Khedive selected for their beauty as being fit to mark the passage of an empress.

All round the Mediterranean the eucalyptus has been spread since then by those who love the beauty that belongs to trees. To Italy it went to give grace to the hillsides and to drive the pestilence from malaria laden lowlands; in Spain it has added charm to public parks and private gardens. In Portugal it has served to beautify the royal home at Cintra, and one who would see a stately gum tree in its pride ought to make the pilgrimage to those mountain groves where, straight as darts, and of gigantic size, they cent the upland air with their blossoms and strew the ground with the profusion of their capsules. From Portugal, Madeira has had its forests made more beautiful and more valuable by the gift of the gum tree, and in all Funchal it would be difficult to find that human being that had not a real love for the dappled beauties that clothe the slopes above the town. The Algiers which faces the sea and Europe is an outlandish mixture of European hotels, tourist resorts, and native squalor; but the Algiers which faces the heat of Africa is a place of hills and valleys, and this Algiers is like enough to Mount Lofty to make the landscape strangely familiar. Gum trees line the roadside, gum trees march up the gullies on the hills, and gum trees cluster round the homesteads—gum trees grown with care and with pride, loved for their beauty and their grace.

Everywhere in those latitudes in which the eucalyptus will flourish and in which people are attune to the beauties of nature the tree is loved and admired and cultivated. Wherever there is a thirst for having the surroundings of life made as beautiful as possible one may see Australia's national tree. Even where its existence is one long fight against unsuitable conditions it is carefully nurtured, and at Christmas-time in Sussex I watched an enthusiast wrap straw and sack around his young trees to protect them from the frost, for his blue gums were his pride.

San Francisco's Love of Beauty.

Of all the cities I have visited, I have seen none that has expressed so vividly the desire of its present inhabitants to have all things made beautiful as has San Francisco. You may go to length and breadth of San Francisco, cross the harbour, and make the tour of the outlying districts, and see everywhere an expres-

sion of a love of beauty that ranges in what, at first sight, seems the most perplexing grades from splendid buildings and lovely parks and gardens to bathing beauties perfect of form and somewhat scant of covering. San Francisco has cherished the beauty of Australian trees as no other place that I have seen. It has planted eucalyptus by the million, and no more stately gums live than those that clothe the beautiful world to which the Golden Gate gives admission. I walked in groves of gum trees, I admired single beauties of perfect growth in Golden Gate Park, and everywhere beneath the gums was wattle in full bloom, making the air heavy with its scent and the whole scene splendid with its golden mass of flowers. In Buena Vista Park I sat and watched the butterflies as they visited the wattle, and the children and the lovers as they went their ways among the trees; and then the wonder of it all struck me—there was not one unsightly or maimed tree among them all. No gum tree but was perfect, no wattle that had been despoiled or broken. There was no sign of death or decay, for every tree and bush expressed the perfect beauty of healthy and vigorous growth.

Now, in all this wonder of San Francisco there are two factors, and these two factors are in truth the elements of American national characteristics. There is the deep sentimentality that finds expression here in the love of beauty in a tree, a love that demands that the tree shall be well-cared for, and thereby fulfil its destiny of being a thing of beauty. Just as beauty parlours find a place everywhere in America, so the tree doctor is a recognised and well-employed institution. It is right that both women and trees should look their best, and the services of the specialist are available for either. In addition to sentimentality there is also the true practical character of the American displayed in this matter of the eucalyptus forests. "The best thing that has come to California since the gold days of '49," was what the motor man said when I remarked on the vast number of gum trees—and this by reason of the value of their timber.

Now, surely this is rather strange, and not a little sad, that to see a perfect gum tree, unmaimed and cared for, one must go beyond the limits of Australia. It has been told of a visitor from Europe that when he returned from the antipodes, and was asked his impression of the eucalyptus forests, he replied, "I saw no forests, but many battlefields."

Gaunt, dead, and dying gums, ringbarked and stricken, how familiar have these grown to Australian eyes. If spared from the vandal with the axe, how often is the grandest of them all regarded merely as an object to which to nail unsightly advertisements for tyres, or pills, or tea. Truly, a tree doctor would die of a broken heart in Australia, since he could only turn undertaker.

**Wattle Blooms.**  
We have a day named Wattle Day—we have many days when the roads to the hills are strewn with the broken golden branches, and when every car carries its burden of destruction, and thus we express our admiration for that which is supposed to be a national emblem. Even its commercial exploitation has made its home in South Africa. Our poets praise the gum trees and our artists paint them, and they raise their gaunt dead limbs against the sky in an appeal that one day they may be loved of all men, and not merely be sung to and painted. But in San Francisco, in Funchal, in Honolulu and around the Mediterranean they flaunt their beauty, for they are loved.

Amidst the wealth of wattle blooms in Buena Vista, I watched the native birds all unconcerned at the presence of those who strolled among the trees and enjoyed the beauty of the place. There were children everywhere; there were small boys; but I saw no flowers plucked, no withered and abandoned gathering, no bird molested. That this was not due to the peace of one particular day was evident from the tameness of the birds and the perfection of the bushes. Nesting boxes for wild birds, bird baths and bird dining tables are familiar to all who dwell in suburban or rural England. In America they are an organized part of the sentimental side of national life, and here is a remarkable evidence of that spirit that has done so much to make life beautiful, that no Christmas festivity is complete without the birds being provided with their own Christmas tree.

**The Willy Wagtail.**  
One splendid day I spent at Hakipuu, on the Island of Oahu, and here the day was a happy one for my host, since he had realized his dreams and liberated some Australian willy wagtails in that beautiful place. He had given them their liberty nearby the pastures of a dairy herd that they might have the cows for company; nor had they far to go to meet with the Murray magpies that have been successfully established in secure island sanctuary. I listened to the pride with which the enterprise was narrated, the joy in its achievement and the pleasure in the presence of these birds to which sentiment so naturally clings; and I thought of the black-and-white corpses I had seen along the Coorong track after the passage of those "sportsmen" who, having had poor success with duck, had still some cartridges to expend. I like to know that the willy wagtails are following the placid cows in peaceful Oahu, even though they had to leave Australia to do it.

**Seals.**  
Every one who sees the sights of San Francisco is taken with pride to the Ocean Coast where, from a fine building perched high on the cliff, he may look out upon the Seal Rocks. I was one of

hundreds who selected a peaceful Sunday morning for this business. With hundreds of others, I watched the seals disport themselves unmolested upon their rocky home. I saw the big bulls lie sleeping in the sun; I watched the young cows haul themselves wet and glistening from the surf and salute each other with that muzzling so reminiscent of a human kiss. I noted how the people who had come to gaze on them as part of a day's outing, spoke of them with pride and admiration. The seals, like the buildings and the parks, were something to be proud of. They were part of their beautiful city, and took their place in that scheme of the preservation of natural beauty that has made San Francisco the delight it is. As I stood watching, now the peaceful seals and now the happy sightseers, my mind went back to the Great Australian Bight and to Pearson's Isles.

On June 19, 1911, a deputation waited on the Premier of South Australia to urge upon him the need for better protection of native plants and animals. In his reply to that deputation, the Premier mentioned Pearson's Isles as a boast, and assured his audience that the Government "had preserved those islands inviolate from the foot of man." (Cheers.) "Any one who landed there would have to spend a portion of his life in one of His Majesty's hotels." (Cheers.) To one who has visited these islands since and seen the beautiful beaches and the uplands strewn with the reeking corpses of seals, slain and flayed in systematic brutality, those cheers of 15 years ago seem cheaply won from the earnest men who pleaded for mercy on behalf of the animals. Should South Australia ever contemplate making Pearson's Isles a show place for tourists, it would, perhaps, be well to clear away the corpses of the seals before any visitors from San Francisco arrive.

ADV. 11.5.26

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REG. 11.5.26

"THAT CHILD IS SIMPLY STAGGERING"

MR. SCHILSKY'S COMMENT ON PERTH PIANIST.

"That child is simply staggering! I am sure she does not know what the word 'difficulty' on the piano means. That is what we call a born pianist. . . . She is a child you are going to be exceedingly proud of. She is not only going to be a great pianist, but a sensational pianist."

Mr. C. Schilsky's praise of Miss Eileen Joyce in the above terms was the most arresting feature of Eisteddfod happenings rich in interest. Miss Joyce (who is a native of Boulder City, not yet 18, and at present a pupil at the Loreto Convent, Swanbourne) had just taken first place in the any-age piano section. On the previous day she secured the open piano championship. Later, also, she and Miss M. Slattery were placed first for the open piano duet. Mr. Schilsky reiterated his "fervent wish" that Perth should see to it that she is sent to Europe. She would go, he said, to some great artist who would give her new ideas. In view of her great successes she had suggested that she should withdraw from the under 18 contest. That, Mr. Schilsky commented, was worthy of a great artist. (Applause.)

"Eileen Joyce," said Mr. Schilsky (of the Adelaide Conservatorium), Eisteddfod adjudicator, "is the biggest genius I have ever met throughout my travels. When I say that I am speaking of England, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, I have never come across anything like it."

As the outcome of a meeting between Mr. Schilsky and Mr. Hamilton Brown, manager of the Prince of Wales Theatre, and attended also by the Rev. Father McMahon and Professor A. D. Ross, Miss Joyce was engaged at a salary of £25 to play at the theatre named for one week (writes The West Australian), and arrangements for sending her to Europe for further study are to be pushed forward vigorously. The Premier, it is stated, has promised to do "anything within reason" in this connection. Mr. Schilsky has advised that the girl should go to Paris. A committee has been formed with this end in view.

"I would like the Perth people to know," Mr. Schilsky said, "that I have not formed my judgment about this girl