



Photos by J. G. Peacr.

IT was scorching hot, and not a breath of wind came from off the land as the "Ville de la Ciotat" passed through the Sydney Heads, bound for New Caledonia. The passengers were all on deck taking a long, last look at the lovely harbour. Its shores, green carpeted and studded with villas and cottages, make it one of the most beautiful harbours in the world. As the ocean swell was felt, I noticed a pathetic, pale-green expression settling upon some of the countenances of my fellow passengers as they made for their cabins. Like Gringoire, they asked themselves, "If I am, can this be? If this is, can I be?" The rest of us who had recently travelled from France were not affected by the movement of the boat. For four days the blue sky and the white-capped waves were our only companions. The following day we sighted the lighthouse, a structure of brick standing upon a small coral island.

At intervals those recovering from mal-de-mer came on deck. One of the gentlemen, who would have beaten a shrewd Yankee at a guess, caused quite a flutter

amongst his friends. Shading his eyes with one hand he pointed far out to sea. Eager eyes followed his movement, and at his cry, "There is the pilot!" great excitement ensued—the men betting freely as to the possible colour of his eyes and the clothes he wore, also whether he was tall or short. All strained their eyes to identify the small object bobbing so jauntily upon the smooth water. It was indeed the pilot, and he was soon on board.

The ocean swell was lost as we neared Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia. There seemed to be no harbour, only a vast expanse of ocean, studded with beautiful islands. Between these islets are great waterways, many fathoms deep on their leeward sides.

A long range of mountains was silhouetted against the bright blue of the heavens, the highest peak being Mt. d'Or, aptly named, for gold is found here as well as other ores—in fact, the whole island is particularly rich in minerals.

The hot, scorching sun still accompanied us as we cast our eyes over the water—still no harbour appeared.