

## AUSTRALIA'S ONLY CONVICT-BUILT BATHS?

' "Time and tide wait for no man," even here, and as both set in for the bathing season, I cannot, as a faithful chronicler, postpone to a less fitting period to record the fact of a ladies bath being now complete, and most perfect in its completion: the situation has been most admirably chosen, and the means adopted to render it every way most acceptable and inviting, have been eminently successful: delicacy, comfort, and safety, to the most fastidious and timid, have been attended to in every minutia, and those who indulge in the luxury of the bath, whether for their health or pleasure, have much reason to be grateful, in the first instance to the gentlemen who selected the site, and so promptly carried into execution the measures necessary to finish the work-and, in the second, to His Excellency Sir George Gipps, for the very liberal and gracious manner in which he responded to the solicitation for the aid of convict labour to carry into so speedy effect a work of such necessary importance to a watering place.

This bath is situated immediately under Gipps' Point, around the brow of which is now being a placed a close palisading so as more effectually to intercept all view from above, while the approach to it, winding around the point, and descending in a gradual slope down the sides, secures the bathers from view. There are three bathing rooms neatly built under one roof, weather-boarded and shingled, and furnished with the usual appliances. The

seaward face of Gipps' Point, forming the background, presents a steep semicircular concave surface, hollowed out in its centre, the whole being closed in Nature's richest mantle of green, interspersed with native shrubs and marine plants, imparts an air of comfort and placid beauty, which well contrasts with the wild and angry lashings of the foaming tide without, rushing on, wave upon wave, in graceful but uproarious magnificence, until it reaches the rocky curtain that has been so judiciously thrown across the mouth of the bath, against which it breaks and retires in white and boiling froth to the vastly deep, leaving the limp stream to filter through to replenish and refresh the water within. At high tide the water reaches near the doors of the houses - at low water the bath is approached by steps formed of smooth slabs, and the depth is so graduated by a shelving pebbly bottom, that from ankle to where you plunge immersed in perfect security, especially as the deeper parts are furnished with ropes for those who wish to swim or play the whale by floundering in a flurry. The existence of such a bath, in such a district, so short a distance from Sydney, so easily and speedily arrived at, should remind the valetudinarian, the convalescent, and those who are enervated in mind or body, from care and watching, that sea bathing, with change of scene and objects, are conjointly necessary to re-invigorate exhausted nature. I may be told that sea bathing in perfection may be enjoyed upon the Sydney shores: admitted, but change of air and variety of scenery are as necessary, if not more so, and where throughout the Colony can these be enjoyed in equal purity, in greater variety, and richer luxuriance, than in Illawarra! - every taste can be indulged, every fancy and every whim can be satisfied, without trouble, without inconvenience, and with increasing pleasure; from "Gipps' Point" may be surveyed to-day, the calm and gently swelling bosom of the interminable ocean, to-morrow the scene is changed, and the sea comes rolling, in stupendous magnitudes of mountain waves, created in foaming white and tossing up its angry spray on high as it strikes against the rocky cliffs, or rushes up the sandy beach; inland the variegated landscape of nature and art may be viewed from Mount Kiera's giddy height; to give anything at all approaching to a faithful description of the picturesque views from this spot could be impossible, those only who have seen the diorama of "the Valley of Sarneu," Switzerland, can picture to themselves the like view of the Valley of Illawarra, as seen from the Pic-nic rock of Mount Kiera; then we have the lake studded with its islands, upon its tranquil and unruffled bosom, or under the wide spreading branches of the umbrageous fig-trees, every wished-for pleasure may be enjoyed. Are not these inducements then, sufficient to invite those whom I have addressed, as well as the smoke-dried citizens to breathe the purer air of Illawarra, and spurt that roseate hue of health, and cherry lips, which a season's bathing in "Gipps' Point Ladies Bath" will ensure.'

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