



My Mother's Journal: A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope From 1829-1834 (Classic Reprint)

Harriet Hillard

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Excerpt from My Mother's Journal: A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao, and the Cape of Good Hope From 1829-1834

The chief interest of this diary to those who had no personal acquaintance with the writer lies, of course, in the glimpses it gives of the conditions of life and travel in the third decade of this century, when steam navigation was in its infancy, and the luxuries that are now a matter of course to those that go down to the sea in ships were quite unknown. It is hard to realize that it then took four or five months, at best, to reach China, and that nearly a year must elapse before an answer could be received to a letter sent from there. In those days a ship of seventeen hundred tons was considered a marine marvel, and its accommodations were spoken of as "magnificent." There were no such things then as canned meats, fruits, and vegetables, or condensed milk; and we can readily imagine that provisions for the table, on so long a voyage, must have been somewhat monotonous. And, as there was no possibility of having anything washed on board ship, an enormous amount of linen had to be carried, a lady was obliged to provide herself with at least six dozen of every kind of underclothing, not to mention the variety of other garments that were needed for a voyage that took the traveller from the temperate to the torrid zone and back again to the temperate.

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