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Diary of a Lady's Maid: Government House in Colonial Australia, Journals of Emma Southgate, 'Between Stairs' Servant, 1884–1886

Helen Vellacott

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A very busy day. Lord and Lady Carrington arrived from England. Miss Harbord, 3 Gentlemen in Suite, 3 children, two nurses, two maids, 2 valets. Every room occupied. 47 to dinner-in State dining room-and 500 in the evening. All went off capitally. We got to bed soon after 2 a.m.' The reliable, hard-working and loyal Emma Southgate began her diary when she journeyed across rough seas and under stormy skies from England to Australia in 1884. She travelled as lady's maid to Lady Loch, wife of the newly appointed Governor of Victoria. When they arrived in Melbourne and took up residence in the magnificent Government House, Emma had the presence of mind to continue her record of daily life. The legacy of her diligence is published here for the first time. Through Emma's words we can relive the halcyon days of colonial times- sumptuous parties in elegant ballrooms and receptions on rolling lawns; stylish travel through the colonies of Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales and South Australia; holidays in a grand home at Mount Macedon; important international visitors; and the social whirl that accompanied occasions such as Melbourne Cup week. These events are cha

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