

Colonial Tramp - Travels and Adventures in Australia and New Guinea

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A COLONIAL TRAMP

Travels and Adventures in Australia and New Guinea

BY

HUME NISBET

AUTHOR OF 'THE LAND OF THE HIBISCUS BLOSSOM' 'EIGHT BELLS'
'MEMORIES OF THE MONTHS' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.



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I HAVE, in the voyage out, kept a regular account of the points of interest day by day, for the direct purpose of letting readers who may follow my footsteps know exactly when to look out for the places ; but there is no necessity of doing so any longer, as it is a matter of choice, or convenience, how he may continue the rest of his journeyings—that is, after he shakes himself free of the punctuality of the mail steamships : therefore I drop the diary form with relief to myself, and, I doubt not, with equal pleasure to the reader, and after this will go on, stop, turn aside or back, as I feel inclined, without regard to time.

A balmy morning when we steam through King George Sound, and drop anchor inside the Princess Royal Harbour, with the pretty town of Albany lying in front of us, upon the shores of as lovely a bay as one could wish to look at.

During the night we have been passing Flinders Bay, Black Point, Donelly, Warren, and Bowles rivers, Point d'Entrecasteaux, with Mount Mitchell and the Bennet Ranges, the shores lighted up here and there with bush-fires, and by daybreak have sighted Break-sea Island and lighthouse at the entrance to the sound ; fine bold headlands

CHAPTER XIII

NATIVE NAMES OF PLACES

Western District—Camperdown, and Landscape round—Thompson's Mad Bull—Drive to Lara—A Victorian Station—Mount Elephant.

I SHALL not soon forget the pleasant time I had with this genial Victorian squatter. It cheered me upon many a mile of my travelling.

‘Why do you call this place Camperdown?’ I asked him; for the fact that the land must have had characteristic native names and the incongruity of such a name for such a district struck me forcibly, when they had so much originality to pick and choose from.

‘Why?’ I had hit my friend in a sore place, for his bright blue eyes blazed out with wrath as he answered: ‘Why are all our finest and most poetic native names turned into meaningless English ones? Because some idiot is appointed by Government to rush over the country and give names to places already named properly. The fellow who called our town Camperdown came here in a hurry, pulled out his Bradshaw, and on the first page he opened at random was Camperdown, so he straightway christened it, without rhyme or reason, by that name. And would you believe it, the native name of the township is “Warrnatts.” M'Arthur's hill over there is called “Meenin'gnurt.” That point of land over there on Lake Bullen Merri is called “Wuurna-wee-wheetch,” or the “Home of the Swallow”; the country

CHAPTER XIV

WESTERN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA

Birregurra and Colac—A Drive to Lorne—Black and Tiger Snakes—
Walk through Cape Otway Forest.

THEY say that all good Americans when they die go to Paris. I fondly trust, if I am good enough in this life, after I pass away (for I have almost relinquished the hope during life) that I may be allowed to haunt Birregurra.

‘Don’t bother about Birregurra,’ my friends said; ‘spend what time you may have at Colac, which *is* worth a visit. See its Free Library and Town-hall, the rabbit-preserving factory, and the house of the man who introduced these interesting specimens into Victoria.’ It is the habit of pious Moslems to turn towards Mecca when they mutter their prayers; in Victoria it is the custom of all true squatters to turn towards this unpretentious building when they mutter their prayers—and fervent prayers they are, too. ‘See the bacon-curing, salt-works and fruit-preserving factories, and our grand freshwater lake, Colac, which is nearly 7,000 acres in extent, and delicious water; don’t miss that by any means.’

I didn’t miss Colac, or its lake; but though I hurried over it I made my sketches conscientiously. Somehow, Birregurra had got hold of my imagination by some occult power, and I felt feverish until I had deposited my sketching-bag and minute bundle of change of flannels in the

CHAPTER XXXVI

MOUNT MORGAN

The Queensland Throne of Greasy Mammon the Great.

WE are now in the portion of Queensland where the earth is filled with treasures for those who may not be content with its bounteous surface—gold, silver, copper, and other metals. I have a box filled with precious stones with which a prospector presented me before I left the land, all from Central Queensland, and all in the rough: diamonds, rubies, opals, sapphires and other precious ware. They are dull pebbles of uncertain shape and varied low tones, for they require cutting to bring out their beauty; yet I prefer them as they are, because there may be flaws in them, which I cannot discern now, and I don't want to know their faults. Sufficient for me that experts have decided that they are what they were represented to be, real gems from Queensland.

All round Rockhampton the soil is good and productive; that we are getting into the tropics I know, because a man wanted to sell me a living young crocodile which he had caught a day or two before in the river above the Suspension Bridge.

But one of the most wonderful sights about this part is Mount Morgan, which is a mountain of gold.

In all other parts of the world men have to dig down for the precious metal, whether it is in alluvial or quartz form, but here they have only to shift the loose earth, or quarry

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NEW GUINEA

A General Survey of New Guinea—Its Possibilities, &c.

NEW GUINEA, the largest island in the world, is being forced upon our notice more and more every day by the conflicts between natives and Europeans. The noble abnegation of the missionaries, who so frequently fall victims in their efforts to make peace between the offended Papuan and the acquisitive adventurer, the appalling stories of outrage and cannibalism, and the vague rumours which float towards England of vast possibilities and wealth in future to be gleaned from these coral-bound shores, tempt me to tell you what I know about it.

During this present tour throughout Australasia I went over the British portion of New Guinea, and besides, had the good fortune of being fellow-passenger from Cook Town to Brisbane with Dr. Knappe, who had just returned from his country's portion of this land of wonders; so that while I had the advantage of seeing from Motu Motu to East Cape on the southern side of the island, I likewise had the benefit of his experience of the northern side.

I did not go to New Guinea as a geological, botanical or geographical explorer, but rather in my capacity of artist and author, to observe the people and their ordinary habits, to learn how they built their houses, and cut their canoes, ornaments and general utensils, what they occupied them-

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- use the "Match case" option when you want to eliminate all the occupations "smith" if you only want the name "Smith"
- Don't just search for names. Search the book for other names, places and subjects of interest:
 - look for others of the same name
 - look for others who lived in the same place or street
 - who was the postmaster or police officer in the town?
 - how often and at what time did the coach arrive in town?
 - what churches were there and what time were services held?
 - what other activities were there in the community?
 - look for others who had the same occupation or other interests

All of this and more may be available in a seemingly mundane book such as a directory. Learn much of the background of life at the time, even if your ancestor is not listed there.