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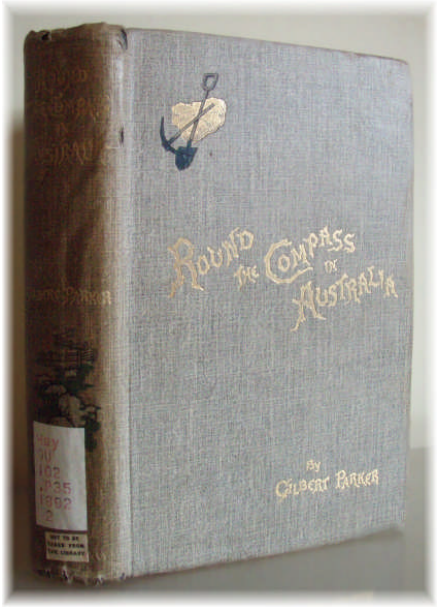

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ROUND THE COMPASS

IN AUSTRALIA.

BY

GILBERT PARKER.

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CHAPTER IV.

RURAL AUSTRALIA.

THE passage from the glimpses of Australia, given in previous chapters, to a proper perspective of the conditions and questions discussed in this and following chapters, should not be difficult. We are to consider a continent that was touched by Dutch navigators, a century after Columbus discovered America, but which only came to be considered as a place for colonisation when Captain Cook took possession of it for the English nearly a century and a quarter ago. The real history of the continent begins with the inauspicious function of landing a shipload of convicts at Botany Bay in 1788. For over seventy-five years some portion of the continent was given over to convict settlement. Western Australia was the last colony of refuge and imprisonment for outcast criminal England. It voluntarily sold itself into bondage long after the deportation of convicts to the other colonies had ceased ; when the land was rising out of its shame, and when the proportion of the convict to the free population of the whole country was small. Legislation practically began in 1829, when New South Wales was given a Legislative Council of fifteen members, one-third of whom were appointed by the Governor for the time being.

Then the Crown began also the system of making

CHAPTER VII.

URBAN AUSTRALIA.

IN regarding urban Australia one instinctively puts the capitals in two groups—Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Brisbane in one ; and Perth and Hobart in the other. Objection might be made to making Hobart a part of urban Australia, since it is the capital of an island distant 150 miles from the mainland ; but it bears as close a commercial relation to Australia proper, as Vancouver Island does to British Columbia, or as the Isle of Wight does to England, socially. At the same time it preserves a character for complacency, morality, commercial and industrial lethargy, honesty and simplicity, quite its own. Perth, cut off as it is from the rest of the continent, is insular in its ideas, and different from the other capitals in its political practice and social economy. Hence, these two small capitals are set by themselves, to be considered apart, or rather to be counted, in a summing up, as a modification of all general estimate. In regard to beauty of situation Sydney and Adelaide may be placed together. Sydney, by many people, would be made to stand alone ; but there is a dignity given to Adelaide by Mount Lofty, in whose shadow it is built, that warrants the association on which I have ventured. The first glory of Sydney is its Harbour. The entrance to it is

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CHAPTER IX.

MELBOURNE AND ADELAIDE IN 1888, *AND THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.*

THERE are two impressions which most people receive when they first arrive at Melbourne: the first is the spacious appearance of the place, and the other is the wonderful activity of the people. Taking a cab at the Spencer Street Station and proceeding up Flinders Street to Swanston Street, thence to Collins Street and Bourke Street, the traffic seems tremendous, and the people are tremendous too in their enterprising pedestrianism. It would be impossible for the casual observer of this city's life to come to any other conclusion than that the capital of Victoria is the busiest place in Australia. The city has the appearance of a business centre. When mingling among the people socially, one gets the impression of a population who are given to entertainment more than simple hospitality, and whose life is one of money-making. You cannot escape the feeling, go where you will, that the chief end of life in Melbourne is to make money. Education is good enough in its way. Art, music, are pleasant; domesticity is, perhaps, valuable in one's old days, when the capacity for the enjoyment of excitement is gone; but the making of money is a perennial pleasure. Of course, just at this season it would be expected that Victoria

CHAPTER XI.

BROKEN HILL IN 1888.

I AM sure that many people, even in Australia, have but hazy notions of Broken Hill, of the country surrounding it, and of where it is. A doctor there told me that a letter came from a bank manager in Melbourne addressed to Broken Hill, South Australia. Another gentleman informed me that friends of his in Sydney grieved, in his presence, that Broken Hill was not in New South Wales. I have been shown a letter from a Melbourne gentleman, addressed to "Broken Hill, Queensland." This ignorance may not be general, but even a small percentage of it would be too much. Broken Hill has been, as a keen, non-investing man said to me, a Cave of Adullam. How many have sunk their all in wildcat schemes, in paper mines, in syndicates formed upon assays of ore that never came from the places claimed for them, we shall not know ; but here and there in one's circle of acquaintance one comes across the victims of speculation. The retired worker who had laid up sufficient to live in comfort for the rest of his life has been obliged to take up the burden again, and so he will hold it till the fitful fever is over,—his shoulder to the wheel that he hoped never to turn again. The mechanic who mortgaged his furniture, the draper who sold his shop, the clerk who left his counter, and the farmer

CHAPTER XV.

QUEENSLAND IN 1889 (*Continued*).

THE HINCHINBROOK CHANNEL—TOWNSVILLE—CHARTERS TOWERS.

QUEENSLAND has no mountain scenery so unique, so accessible, so generally beautiful as that of the Blue Mountains in New South Wales; but she possesses a coast scenery that no other colony in Australasia, save New Zealand, can equal. And for six months in the year it may be viewed with certain comfort and enjoyment. I have been travelling on the Queensland coast for three weeks now, and the sea has been often like a mill pond, and never so disturbed that the poorest sailor, the greatest victim to *mal de mer*, would find it necessary to go below. Nearly all the coast sailing from Brisbane north is done inside the Barrier Reef, and, with that wall of coral to protect the vessels, no one need fear the possible unpleasant experiences that mark the journey from Sydney to Brisbane. I have had a good many water trips in my time, and I have never had one so generally enjoyable as this, though I have tried voyaging, as the bushman says, all kinds. I have travelled on this journey by four steamers so far, and shall be on two more before I get to Brisbane again; but it has been all ease and comfort. No luggage missing, no worry about time, but

CHAPTER XX.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN 1889-90 (*Continued*).

PERTH, THE CAPITAL—FREEMANTLE—MINERALS AND LANDS.

PERTH is not inviting at first sight, but it improves on acquaintance. There is nothing of "bounce" about it; it is built for use, and that use is an humble one. Architecture? Look at the Roman Catholic bishop's palace, it is like a remnant of past glory—Corinthian pillars and portico, balconies and broad front; but come near it, how forlorn and dilapidated it looks! The floor of the portico is rotten and full of huge cracks, the pillars are discoloured and unstable-looking, and when you knock at the door, a feeling of loneliness comes upon you, for the sounds appear to re-echo through empty rooms. The cathedral hard by seems just as careworn and spiritless. Is this a sign of Perth the progressive? Is this an evidence of the energy of the colony that is applying for responsible government? Let us not be unjust. First impressions may be wrong. The bishop who lives in that palace is one of the most hardworking, self-sacrificing, and genuine men in Australia; as witness the Subiaco Boys' School, the Perth Girls' School, the Roman Catholic Girls' Orphanage, the Roman Catholic Boys' Orphanage, and Bishop Salvado's native mission at New Norcia. There is a

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