

**QUEENSLAND PAST AND  
PRESENT. AN EPITOME  
OF ITS RESOURCES  
AND DEVELOPMENT, 1896**

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Thornhill Weedon

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**THORNHILL WEEDON**

**QUEENSLAND PAST AND  
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OF ITS RESOURCES  
AND DEVELOPMENT, 1896**



Queensland.

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**QUEENSLAND**  
**PAST AND PRESENT.**

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**AN EPITOME OF ITS RESOURCES AND  
DEVELOPMENT.**

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1896.

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BY

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**FIRST ISSUE.**

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1896.  
**REGISTRAR GENERAL OF** ☆  
**QUEENSLAND** → → →

## PREFACE.

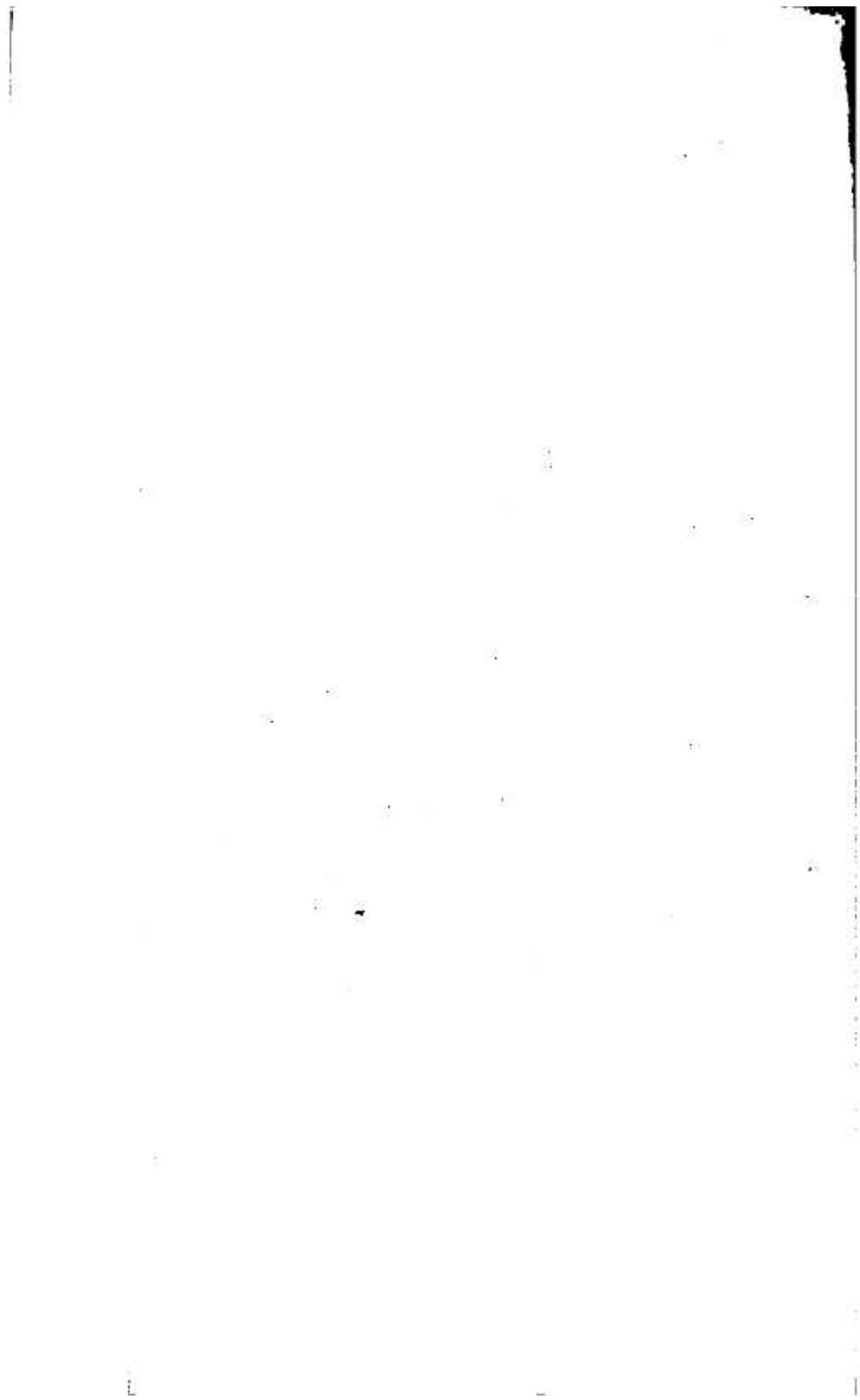
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THE want of a Year Book emanating from official sources has for some time past been making itself felt both from abroad and within the colony.

It has been found that the voluminous information published in the Statistical Register, valuable as it undoubtedly is, fails to satisfy the growing need, and the necessity for the issue of particulars in an epitomised form has become apparent.

Under instructions from the Honourable the Home Secretary, an endeavour has been made to prepare a handbook that it is hoped will serve to illustrate in a concise manner the varied resources of the colony.

Consequent on the pressure of the routine duties of the office, this work has been compiled mainly in private hours, and it therefore cannot but be feared that it leaves much to be desired, both with regard to information and arrangement, and possibly—notwithstanding that the greatest care has been exercised—in some instances as to accuracy—faults common to initial works of this description, but which admit of correction in subsequent issues.



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Part I.  
**GEOGRAPHY.**

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**PHYSICAL FEATURES.**

Queensland, occupying the north-eastern portion of the island continent of Australia, comprises a territory of 668,497 square miles, and thus is more than twice the size of New South Wales and nearly eight times that of Victoria; and, Russia alone excepted, is greatly larger than any country in Europe, exceeding in extent the Empires of Germany and Austro-Hungary together by nearly one-half of their combined area. Starting at Point Danger on the eastern seaboard near the 28th parallel of south latitude, the Colony of Queensland is bounded on the south by New South Wales; Macpherson's Range, the Great Dividing Range, the Dumaresq River, the Barwon River, and the 29th degree of south latitude forming the line of demarcation; it is limited on the west by the 141st meridian of east longitude as far north as the 26th degree of south latitude; from thence by the 138th meridian, by these marching with the province of South Australia as far as the Gulf of Carpentaria; thence under special statute (43 Vic. No. 1) nearly to the 9th parallel. On the north by a line easterly passing close to New Guinea at the mouth of the Baxter River as far as the Great Barrier Reef, which, with a line south in continuation to the north point of Fraser's or Great Sandy Island, and thence by the Pacific Ocean to Point Danger, constitutes the eastern limit.

This vast territory, extending as it does for 1,300 miles from north to south, and 900 miles from east to west, of necessity includes great varieties of soil and climate, which by natural sequence give origin to products of both the temperate and torrid zones.

The physical features of Southern Queensland are very similar to those of New South Wales, consisting near the coast of short rivers, the centres of fertile valleys separated by ranges more or less elevated, but rarely of sufficient height to aspire to the dignity of mountains, although here and there are to be found peaks of considerable altitude. The more important rivers find their source in the Great Dividing Range—a generic term applied to the mountain chain which, in many parts under specific names, extends throughout the length of the colony, separating the waters flowing easterly from those flowing westerly and southerly. This range, continuing through from New South Wales near the 152nd meridian, maintains a distance of from 100 to 300 miles from the coast to about the 21st parallel of south latitude, where it approaches nearer to the sea, until its termination at Cape York.

The country to the west of this range largely consists of undulating downs, lightly timbered, but yielding most nutritious grasses. For many years this portion of the colony was held to be unsuited for agriculture, although its value for pastoral purposes had long been recognised. This fallacy has now been exploded, and beyond doubt large areas of our Western lands only need a readily accessible market to ensure their being placed under tribute to the farmer. In common with the greater part of Australia, Central and Southern Queensland suffer from an irregular supply of surface water. The absence of high mountain ranges possessing a perpetual snow-line renders the rivers of the colony uneven in the extreme as to their flow, at one time, under the influence of continued rains, emulating in volume the mighty rivers of other continents, and again, in time of drought, dwindling to a silver thread, which in turn is too frequently swallowed by the thirsty sand, until naught remains but a series of pools more or less isolated from each other. Great loss amongst the flocks and herds of the grazier has in the past resulted from this absence of permanent surface water, but experience now shows that much of this may be obviated by drawing upon the subterranean supplies which Nature has so liberally provided.

Northern Queensland is more highly favoured both in the quality of its soil and the regularity of its rainfall. The latter is induced by the configuration of the coast-line on the east and north, and the greater altitude of the mountain ranges, which here approach nearer to the ocean. Mount Bellenden-Ker, in the vicinity of Cardwell, is the highest point in Queensland, and, as found by Mr. Meston, 5,270 feet above the level of the sea. On the eastern seaboard the valleys of nearly all of the many small rivers consist of the richest scrub soils, which have been proved to possess a fertility which under favourable conditions at times becomes phenomenal.

The climate of a country so extensive as Queensland varies, of necessity, according to locality, but on the whole may be described as a very healthy one. Although at each new settlement the miasmatic fevers common to all freshly opened up countries prevail for a time, especially in the North, giving trouble to those whose constitutions or whose callings cause them to be peculiarly liable to attack, yet as the country becomes more fully occupied, and drainage and clearing extend, the fever line is found to recede, and many places at one time deemed most unhealthy are now found to possess a reputation for salubrity.

During 1895 the temperature, &c., at Brisbane was, maximum in shade, 93·0; minimum in shade, 33·6; mean of the year in shade, 68·6. Rainfall—number of wet days, 106; number of inches, 59·112.