

**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA: ITS  
PAST AND FUTURE**

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Western Australia: Its Past and Future by James Bonwick

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BY

JAMES BONWICK, F.R.G.S.,

AUTHOR OF

*"Geography of Australia," "Last of the Tasmanians," &c.*



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HIS EXCELLENCY SIR F. NAPIER BROOME, C.M.G., &c., &c.,  
GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

WITH MAP.

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1885.

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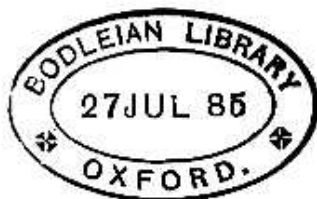
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## PREFACE.

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It may excite surprise in some, that a colony which has slumbered for over fifty years should have suddenly so awakened as to call forth considerable attention. What could have happened recently there ?

For many years it has been slighted by colonial neighbours, and ignored by those at home. It has sunk so low as to have only some thirty thousand inhabitants in 1885. Is it so sudden a discovery that fertile land is there ? In 1845, just forty years ago, when the *Geography for Australian Youth* appeared, I put therein this passage about that colony :—

“The land near the coast is very sandy, but good soil is to be found further in the country.”

It is no new revelation, therefore, that Western Australia may have sand in one part, timber in another, and capital harvests elsewhere. A panic seized the best of the early settlers, and they who stayed behind were content to jog along very quietly, while Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide attracted the world's gaze.

All at once we hear much of mineral wealth and valuable wood, known long ago ; and the pearl shells have been gathered during many unnoticed years. The climate, ever recognised as healthful, now acquires a great reputation.

What has happened is this : the slanders have been lived down, and the good points have been recognised and talked about. One thing more has happened ; regions northward, once deemed useless and forbidding, prove to have as good feeding ground as in the other colonies, with means of access formerly never expected.

Whether an extensive Gold Field be revealed or not—and it is confidently expected—there are plenty of good things

in the colony to be had by those who have faith in the place, and will honestly labour to make the best of its resources.

Pressure for space in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, and even Queensland, drove hunters after cheap grass to seek it in the districts of South Australia and Western Australia, though neither gave much hope to pilgrim flock-masters. The announcement of splendid pastures in the north-east of Western Australia will soon bring flocks and herds there from other settlements.

But what has stirred the English public to regard with favour the claims of that colony?

While the good tales told of it in Australia were gradually producing their effect here, the recent address of the Governor, Sir F. Napier Broome, before the Royal Colonial Institute, in the presence of the Prince of Wales and a very large and sympathetic audience, was without doubt the immediate cause of the sudden popularity of Western Australia.

To rush over thither impulsively without due consideration, or a sufficient knowledge of the locality, might be as unfortunate for the speculative emigrant, as damaging to the interests of the colony. To save disappointment, and to promote the real good of place and person, this little work has been hastily prepared by one who has known the Australias many years, and who regards with deep interest the fortunes of each Australian community.

Though half a century old, this colony has so renewed its youth, as to present all the attractions and hopeful aspects of a newly-established settlement. One thing is, quite certain, that it is not overdone. Whatever its drawbacks, it is a land of peace and plenty, if not of fortune making.

JAMES BONWICK.

LONDON, *April 17th*, 1885.

# WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

## ITS PAST AND FUTURE.

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### GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

A glance at the map of Western Australia gives little satisfaction. The country has so different an aspect to that given by Eastern Australia, that it is easily comprehended why the latter became the favourite with emigrants. On the eastward is seen a massive range running the entire length of Australia, from Torres Straits to Bass's Straits, giving birth to a succession of rivers the whole extent of the chain of hills.

Western Australia shows no such range, but only some isolated rises, or moderately connected mountains. There is no such main source of water in any lengthened dividing range. The coast line is seldom marked by the mouths of streams, except in the south-west corner, a district towards the north-east, and another eastward of North-west Cape.

Both sides, however, display an area in the interior very slightly marked with watercourses, though the Western has by far the larger proportion of waste and waterless tracts. While the Eastern had the advantage of earlier occupation, large government expenditure, a hopefulness of expectation in the search for new pastures and fresh features, the Western suffered long from depression after first failure, and made until very recently but feeble exertions after the revelation of better lands. Thus it is that the very map partakes of the gloom that rested on the early settlers.

What are the leading features of the colony?

The coast-line is little broken on the south, part of the west, or part in the north-west. To the north-east there are