

**AN AUSTRALIAN  
RAMBLE, OR, A  
SUMMER IN AUSTRALIA**

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An Australian ramble, or, a summer in Australia by J. Ewing Ritchie

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**J. EWING RITCHIE**

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AN  
AUSTRALIAN RAMBLE

OR

*A SUMMER IN AUSTRALIA*

BY

J. EWING RITCHIE  
*(CHRISTOPHER CRAYON)*

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1890

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TO  
THE HONOURABLE EDMUND WEBB,  
BATHURST, NEW SOUTH WALES,  
THE FOLLOWING PAGES, MANY OF THEM WRITTEN  
UNDER HIS HOSPITABLE ROOF, ARE  
GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.



## AN AUSTRALIAN RAMBLE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### OFF TO AUSTRALIA.

The *Orisaba*—Reasons for Travelling—The Bishop—Soda and Whisky—The Spanish Coast—Heroic Memories—Gibraltar—Wickedness of Naples—Port Said.

I SEND this from the *Orisaba*, one of the finest, if not the finest, of the fine steamers of the Orient Line that keep open the communication between this country and Australia; and this is how it came to pass. One day last summer I was standing on the deck of a steamer, when a gentleman remarked to me, 'I come from a country where they have had no rain for nine months.' 'Where is that?' said I. 'Australia,' was the reply; and immediately I made up my mind to go there. As is the custom of most of us, I talked

the matter over with my friends, some of them in the first rank of the medical world. 'You can't do better,' was the unanimous reply; 'you will come back ten years younger,' said they all. Well, surely it is worth taking a little trouble and incurring a little expense, for a man—not to put too fine a point on it—presenting daily a more venerable appearance, to put back the clock, as it were, and to regain somewhat of his manly prime. 'What can I do for you?' said the family doctor to the mother of the Rothschilds, when he was summoned to her side; 'I cannot make you grow young again.' 'No,' was her ladyship's reply; 'I know you can't, doctor; but I wish to continue to grow old.' And here, just by taking a trip to Australia, and escaping the hardships of an English winter and spring, actually I shall achieve what the mother of the Rothschilds did not dare to hope for. Surely the attempt is worth an effort, especially when, owing to the kindness of a certain firm of publishers who shall be nameless, the question of expense was satisfactorily solved.

In these days of school-boards and universal travel a good deal has yet to be learned of our colonies. When I was younger, people in this country were in the most ludicrous state of ignorance as respects the size, area, wealth and value of what it is now



the fashion to term the fifth quarter of the globe. At that time, say about 1830, there were not much more than 70,000 in all the land. Then Sydney Smith was writing of it as a region 'in which Nature has been so capricious, that she makes cherries with the stones on the outside, and a monstrous animal, as tall as a grenadier, with the head of a rabbit and a tail as big as a bedpost, hopping along at the rate of five hops to a mile.' Listen to Charles Lamb, as he writes, in his 'Essays of Elia,' to a friend in New South Wales: 'What must you be willing by this time to give for the sight of an honest man? You must have forgotten how *we* look. Do you grow your own hemp? What is your staple trade—exclusive of the national profession, I mean? Your locksmiths, I take it, are some of your great capitalists.' It was at that time the popular belief was embodied by Tom Hood as follows in 'A Letter from a Settler for Life in Van Diemen's Land,' wherein Susan Gale writes to her old friend and fellow-servant in Mount Street, Grosvenor Square: 'As soon as ever the Botes rode to Land I don't aggravate the Truth to say their was half duzzen Bows apiece to Hand us out to shoar; and sum go so far as to say they was offered to through Speaking Trumpits afore they left the Ship-side.' There is still a legend of a Missionary Society

at home sending out a representative to Australia, and so carefully planning his route that he was to preach at Adelaide on the Sunday morning, and at Melbourne, some hundreds of miles away, in the afternoon, and that was before they had a railway. There are many who still think that a colony is a place where men are fortunate, as a late colonial governor remarked, if they enjoy three meals a day and a place to sleep in, where the inhabitants sit down to dinner in their shirt-sleeves, and think it a hardship if they take off their boots when they go to bed. But the greatest fallacy of all is the supposition that in a colony anyone can get a living, no matter how incompetent he may have proved himself at home. We laugh, but are we much wiser now? In Fleet Street last week, as I bade good-bye to a friend, he said to me, 'I have a boy who will be coming home just as you land. I sent him out with the best introductions. He has been six months in Melbourne and Sydney and elsewhere, and can find nothing to do, and now I have to get him home again.' It will be something if, in the course of my letters, and as the result of my inquiries, I shall be able to save fathers and mothers at home the trouble and expense and pain of such fruitless ventures, and it will be better still if I can help men and women at home to understand and

realize what is being done by our fellow-subjects on the Australian Continent to plant that great land with Anglo-Saxon civilization and freedom and religion—if I can duly describe its cities and their people, their wealth and intelligence, their general activity and enterprise, their inner and public life. According to all accounts a good deal is yet to be told. Even Mr. Froude has omitted much that would interest the reader, and Dr. Dale has left something for the individual who may chance to follow in his steps. The fact is, the subject is too big for any one man.

I have said I send this from the *Orizaba*, one of the finest, if not the finest steamer of the Orient Line. Then there are the P. and O., who do not carry third-class passengers, and French and German steamers in abundance, to say nothing of other firms, who are always sending out steamers and sailing-vessels as well. As regards the latter, the firm of Devitt and Moore, of Fenchurch Street, deserve special mention, as they are the oldest people in the trade. Tourists who have the time to spare say there is nothing like a sailing-vessel for an Australian trip, and of the ships that sail in that direction, from all I hear, there are none that can equal the *Sobraon* (Captain Elmslie), and the *Macquarie*, in the Sydney