

The Geography
of Victoria

HISTORICAL, PHYSICAL, and POLITICAL

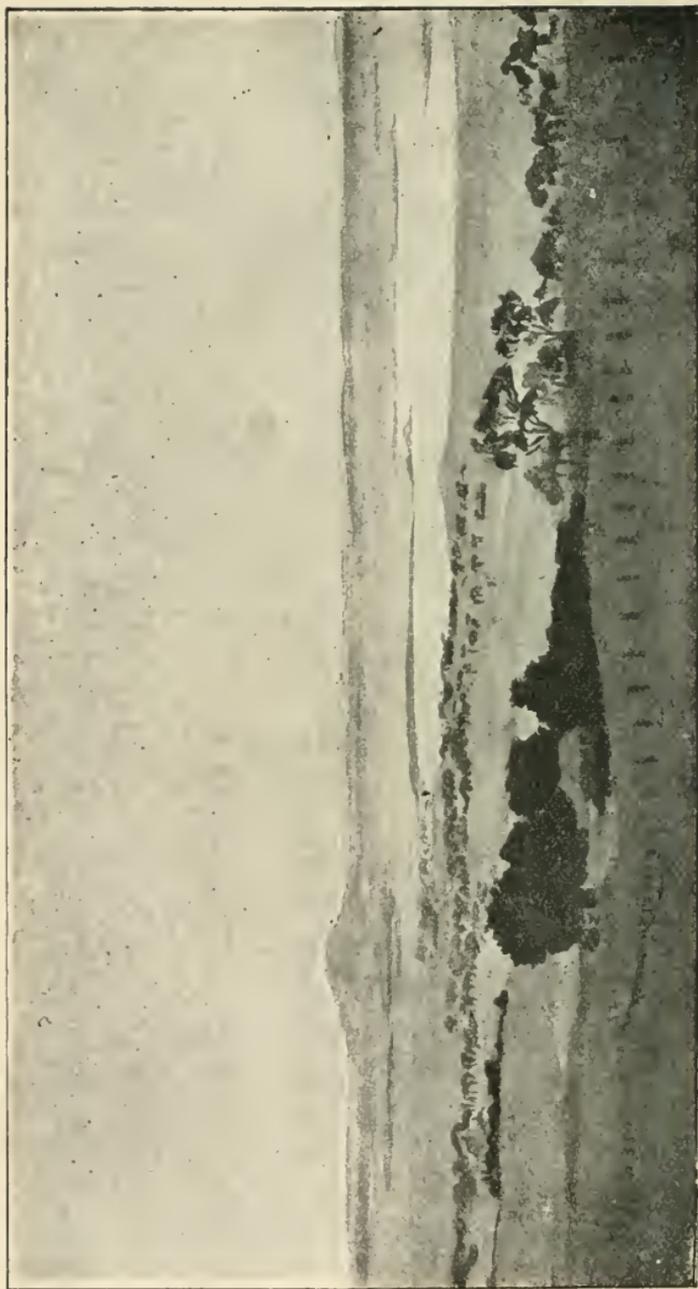
BY

J. W. GREGORY, D.Sc., F.R.S.



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Mt. Kurtweeton.

Mt. Elephant.

Lake Kolongulac.

View across the Volcanic Plains of Western Victoria, with the craters of Mt. Elephant and Mt. Kurtweeton, and the dry bed of Lake Kolongulac.

(From a sketch by A. G., from Gnotuk, near Camperdown.)

THE
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BY

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"The Great Rift Valley," "The Foundation of British
East Africa," &c., &c.*



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PREFACE.

As it is little more than three years since I first landed in Victoria, the main need of this preface is to apologize for my presumption in writing a book on its geography, to confess ignorance, and express gratitude to the many friends, without whose help this book would be even more incomplete than it is. The short time available for my study of the geographical structure of Victoria has been reduced by a fatality, that has prevented my devoting to field work in this State, any one of the three periods "of double drill and no canteen," technically called "long vacations." However, I have been able to visit most parts of the State, and to examine personally all the localities on which stress is herein laid. The book is an expansion of a course of University Extension Lectures given last year, during which I felt the need of some book treating the geography of Victoria in relation to the development of its topography. A new comer has some advantage in undertaking such a work, for he most feels the need of a general plan of the State, and of an explanation of the relations between the different geographical divisions.

The main duty of this preface is to express my indebtedness to the many friends who have helped me with information, and have kindly answered my persistent, and often troublesome questions. The two men who have suffered most from my geographical inquisitiveness are Mr. A. W. Howitt, the most clear-sighted of Victorian geographers, and Mr. Baracchi, the Government Astronomer; and they have always suffered me gladly. Much suggestive information about districts, of which the best maps are inadequate or incorrect, I owe to many swagsmen and prospectors, who, while we have shared a billy of tea on the roadside or on the mountain track, have given me the benefit of their intimate acquaintance with the back-blocks of Victoria. I must also express my best thanks to Professor Kernot, Professor Spencer, and Mr. T. S. Hall, of the University; to all my colleagues in the Geological Survey; to Mr. T. F. Morkham, the Secretary for

PREFACE

Lands; Mr. F. Tate, the Director of Education; Mr. A. S. Kenyon, of the Water Supply Department; Mr. Hardy, of the Lands Department; and Mr. J. H. Coane. I am indebted for the weather maps (Fig. 106-110) to Mr. Baracchi; for photographs to Mr. A. E. Kitson (Fig. 14, 16, 24, and 72), Mr. W. Ferguson (Fig. 18 and 36), Mr. H. J. Grayson (Fig. 19, 34, 90, 93, and 94), and to Mr. W. Bradford, of Ballarat East, for Fig. 27. Fig. 48 is from a survey by Mr. J. Easton. Fig. 43 is from a diagram by Professor Kernot. The Frontispiece is reproduced from a sketch by my wife. Mr. Baracchi has removed from me the temptation of libelling the Victorian climate, by himself contributing a short sketch on that subject.

J. W. G.

June, 1903.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

PART I.—HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY.

CHAP. I.	—Situation and Extent of Victoria	...	9
	II. —Discovery and Colonisation	...	9
	III.—Boundaries	... ..	27
	IV.—References to Literature	... ..	29

PART II.—PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

CHAP. I.	—The Victorian Coast	...	30
	(a) Exploration of the Coast	...	31
	(b) The Two Coast Types	...	32
	(c) The Victorian Coast Types	...	38
II.	—Land Forms	... ..	52
III.	—The Mountains of Victoria	... ..	57
IV.	—The Plateaus, Basins, and Plains	... ..	76
	(a) The Plateaus	... ..	76
	(b) The Pene-Plains	... ..	82
	(c) The Basins	... ..	85
	(d) The Plains	... ..	88
V.	—The Evolution of the Victorian River System	... ..	97
	(a) General Character of Rivers	... ..	97
	(b) The Work of Rivers	... ..	98
	(c) River Systems	... ..	102
	(d) The Victorian Rivers	... ..	105
VI.	—The Lakes of Victoria	... ..	123
	(a) The South-western Lakes	... ..	123
	(b) The Wimmera Lakes	... ..	130
	(c) The Gippsland Lakes	... ..	136
	(d) The Murray Lakes	... ..	149
	(e) Mountain Tarns	... ..	161
VII.	—The Earthquakes of Victoria	... ..	163
VIII.	—Extinct Volcanoes of Victoria	... ..	179
IX.	—The Weather of Victoria and its Causes	... ..	198

PART III.—POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY.

CHAP. I.	—Geographical Evolution of Victoria	...	238
II.	—The Aborigines	... ..	241
III.	—The Colonists	... ..	246
IV.	—The Pastoral Occupation	... ..	251
V.	—The Mines	... ..	255
VI.	—The Railways	... ..	256
VII.	—Irrigation and Water Supply	... ..	260
VIII.	—Future Development	... ..	266

APPENDIX I.	—TABLE OF STRATIFIED ROCKS OF VICTORIA	...	269
II.	—LIST OF EARTHQUAKES IN 1900 AND 1901	...	271
III.	—RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE TABLES...	...	275

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	... ..	...	281
INDEX OF TECHNICAL TERMS	... ..	...	283
GENERAL INDEX	... ..	...	286



THE GEOGRAPHY OF VICTORIA.

PART I.—HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY.

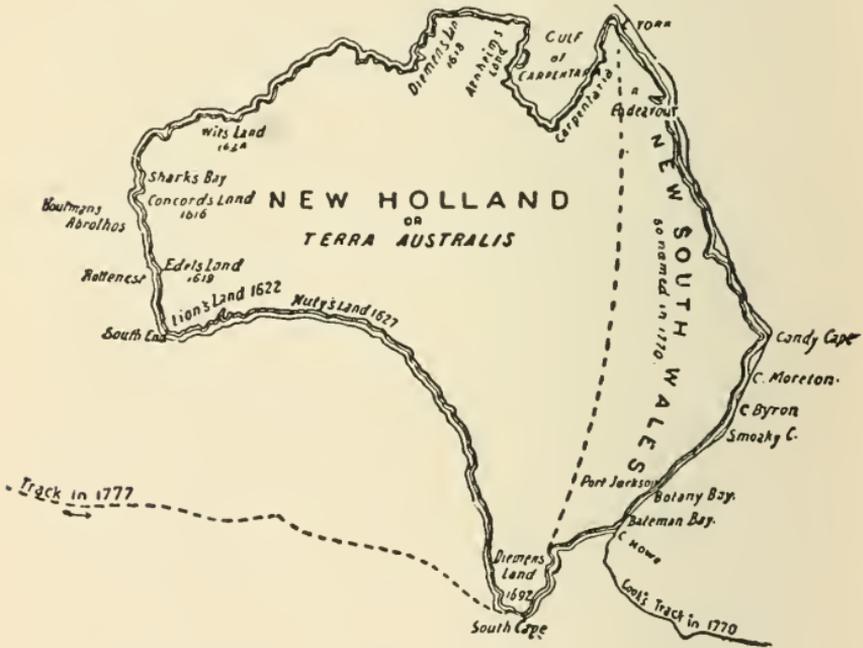
CHAPTER I.—SITUATION AND EXTENT OF VICTORIA.

VICTORIA is the State in the south-eastern corner of the continent of Australia. It lies between the 34th and 39th parallel of south latitude, and the 141st and 150th meridian of east longitude. The length from east to west is 420 miles; the breadth from north to south is 250 miles. It has a coast line of 600 miles. The area is 87,884 square miles, or 56,245,760 acres. Some small islands in the northern part of Bass Strait belong, geographically, to Victoria, which maintains the lighthouses upon them, and pays the expenses entailed there; but they belong, politically, to Tasmania.

CHAPTER II.—THE DISCOVERY AND COLONISATION OF VICTORIA.

THE land of Victoria was discovered by Captain—then Lieutenant—Cook on 19th April, 1770. On his voyage from New Zealand to Australia, he failed to reach the coast of Van Diemen's Land as soon as

he expected; and the first land, instead of trending from north to south, was found to run from north-east to south-west. The most southern point of this coast line Cook named Point Hicks, after his lieutenant, who first sighted it. Cook recognised that he had entered either a gulf or a strait; and he was inclined to believe that it was a gulf, as the sea fell so quickly



Map showing Cook's Voyages. From an Atlas published in 1798.

after the wind had died away. This fact suggested that Tasmania was joined to Australia, and that the eastern part of what we know as Bass Strait was thus protected from the western swell. But Cook had to leave this problem unsolved, and went his way "doubtful whether they [Tasmania and Australia] are one land or no."*

W. J. L. Wharton—Captain Cook's Journal, being the first voyage round the world made in H.M. Barque *Endeavour*, 1768-71. A literal transcript of the original manuscript 1893. p. 237.

Cook's colleague, Furneaux, in 1773, visited Bass Strait to settle this question; he was convinced "that there is no strait between New Holland [Australia] and Van Diemen's Land, but a very deep



Surgeon Bass.

(From a portrait in the possession of Mr. J. J. Shillinglaw Melbourne.)

bay." Captain Hunter, in 1793, from the evidence of the tides, suggested that Tasmania is an island. This fact was first proved in 1797-98, in a courageous journey by Surgeon Bass, who sailed from Sydney in an open boat, and entered the strait that now bears

his name. He landed at Ram's Head on 19th December, 1797, and was thus the first European to set foot in Victoria. He failed to identify Cook's Point Hicks, which according to Sir William Wharton* was not a promontory, but "was merely a rise on the coast line where it dipped below the horizon to the westward; and the name of Point Hicks Hill is now borne by an elevation that seems to agree with the position." Bass worked westward along the coast, round Wilson's Promontory, and on the 4th January, 1798, he entered Western Port by its eastern entrance. The failure of his provisions compelled him to return. But the heavy swell that was running from the west showed him that the sea between Tasmania and the opposite coast of Australia was a strait and not a gulf.

The first visit to Victoria from the west was made in 1800 by Lieutenant Grant, in the *Lady Nelson*. He sailed the whole length of Victoria, and named most of the principal headlands on the southern coast. His chief contribution to Victorian geography was the discovery of a bay between Cape Otway and Cape Schanck, which he named King's Bay, after Governor King. Grant missed Port Phillip, which was first entered by a seaman named Bowen on the 1st February, 1802. Bowen was then in charge of a boat belonging to the *Lady Nelson*, which, with its commander, Lieutenant Murray, entered Port Phillip on the 15th February, 1802. He named Arthur's Seat, from a fancied resemblance to the mountain behind Edinburgh. He was closely followed by Flinders, who sailed into Port Phillip on the 26th April, 1802. With his usual energy Flinders

* Wharton, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

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