

## VICTORIA.

### AREA AND BOUNDARIES.

VICTORIA is situated in the south-eastern portion of the continent of Australia, and lies between the parallels of  $34^{\circ}$  and  $39^{\circ}$  south latitude, and the meridians of  $141^{\circ}$  and  $150^{\circ}$  east longitude. The greatest length east and west is about 480 miles, and the greatest width, in the west, about 250 miles. The surface area of the state is 87,884 square miles. Roughly speaking, the country has the shape of a scalene triangle, of which the vertex is at Cape Howe. On the north and north-east Victoria is bounded by the River Murray and a surveyed line running from Forest Hill, near the head waters of the stream, to Cape Howe. The southern boundary is formed by the Southern Ocean and Bass Strait, the Pacific forming the south-eastern boundary. On the west, the state is bounded by South Australia, the dividing line being about 242 geographical miles in length, and approximating to the position of the 141st meridian of east longitude.

### COASTAL FEATURES.

The total length of the coast line is about 750 miles. A reference to the map shows that there are three prominent projections on the south; terminating respectively in Cape Nelson, Cape Otway, and Wilson's Promontory. The last-mentioned projection is the southmost point on the continent of Australia, and is situated in latitude  $39^{\circ} 8'$  south, longitude  $146^{\circ} 26'$  east. The most western point on the coast, at the termination of the frontier line, is in latitude  $38^{\circ} 4'$  south. Proceeding thence eastward from the head of Discovery Bay, the coast begins with a succession of sandstone cliffs backed by grassy undulating country extending for some distance inland. Between Discovery Bay and Portland Bay there is a well-wooded peninsula broken by expanses of grassy meadow, Capes Bridgewater and Nelson lying at the extremities of small projections. Portland Bay is a crescent-shaped inlet with stretches of sandy beach backed by granite cliffs. Farther round are Port Fairy and Warrnambool Bay. From this point downwards to Cape Otway there is a series of precipitous cliffs; Cape Otway itself is a bluff headland at the extremity of a range of coastal mountains. It is provided with a lighthouse at an elevation of 300 feet above sea-level, and the beams from its powerful lantern are visible many miles out at sea. From this point the coast takes a decided sweep to the north-east to the head of Port Phillip through about a degree of latitude. Between Cape Otway and the Barwon Heads, close to the entrance of Port

Phillip, the coast is rugged, and along the whole extent of this shore line there are only two places where a landing can be effected—at Apollo Bay and Loutit Bay—and these are difficult of approach in south-easterly weather. Point Lonsdale and Point Nepean are the headlands marking the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, the largest inlet on the coast of Victoria. The bay is a land-locked inland sea, having an extreme length of 30 geographical miles from north to south, and a breadth from east to west of about 35 miles. The entrance is about 2 miles across, and a short distance within there were originally numerous sandbanks and shoals impeding navigation; these have been so dealt with that they do not now offer any serious hindrances to navigation, as the channels are well-defined and lighted. The western arm of Port Phillip, known as Corio Bay, forms the harbour at Geelong, and Hobson's Bay at the northern extremity is the port of Melbourne. At Queenscliff, just within the heads, there is a lighthouse at a height of 109 feet above sea-level. Cape Schank is an imposing headland on the peninsula between Port Phillip and Western Port, and is provided with a lighthouse 278 feet above sea-level. The greater part of Western Port is shallow and unfit for navigation, but good anchorage may be found with shelter in all winds. The shores of the inlet are generally flat, and in some places swampy, but there is some excellent land in the surrounding district. Cape Liptrap is a narrow point on the western shore of Waratah Bay, and culminates a short distance inland in an eminence rising to a height of over 500 feet and constituting a prominent landmark. Wilson's Promontory, the southmost point of Australia, is a towering granitic mass connected with the mainland by a narrow sandy isthmus, and is a prominent turning-point for vessels from the westward bound for the east coast of Australia. The headland is provided with a lighthouse at an elevation of 383 feet above sea-level. Lying off its extremity are several rocky islets, whose granitic sides rise steeply out of the long rolling waves of the Southern Ocean. Rounding the promontory, the next important indentation is Corner Inlet, protected at its entrance by numerous islands, of which the largest is Snake Island. The inlet is not of much account for navigation purposes, as it is very shallow, portions of it being quite dry at low tide. From this point onward the coast trends north by east, and the greater part of it right up to Cape Howe is low and sandy. Here is situated the Ninety-mile Beach, consisting of an unbroken line of sandy shore, whose monotony is hardly relieved by a background of low sandy dunes. The length of this stretch of coast-line is, moreover, considerably in excess of 90 miles. Towards the eastern portion the sand dunes are backed by a succession of lakes, in places communicating with the sea by narrow channels. Farther on, where the shore line sweeps round to the east, the elevation increases, occasionally rising into bluff eminences. The principal headlands in this portion of the coast are Cape Conran, Cape Everard, and Ram Head. Cape Everard is supposed to have been the first

portion of the coast seen by Captain Cook, and the projection was named by him Point Hicks. Cape Howe, the eastern extremity of the state, lies in latitude  $37^{\circ} 31'$  south and longitude  $149^{\circ} 59'$  east.

The largest island possessed by Victoria is French Island, situated in Western Port, but a considerable portion of its area consists of mud-flats and swamps, so that it is but scantily peopled. Phillip Island, also situated in Western Port, has a population of about 400. Snake Island and Sunday Island, lying off Port Albert, are both low and swampy. Gabo Island, about 5 miles south-west of Cape Howe, is provided with a lighthouse and signalling station.

#### GENERAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

The southward projection of the Great Dividing Range of Australia traverses the state from east to west at a distance varying from 60 to 70 miles from the coast. There are thus, roughly speaking, three great surface divisions—the plain sloping from the mountains southwards to the sea, the elevated table-land country traversed by the Dividing Range, and the plain region sloping from the mountains northward to the Murray River.

The eastern portion of the Great Dividing Range is known as the Australian Alps, and the range terminates to the west in the Pyrenees and Grampians. There are at least six peaks in the cordillera exceeding 6,000 feet in height, and a considerable number between 5,000 and 6,000 feet, the principal being Mount Bogong, 6,508 feet; Mount Feathertop, 6,303 feet; Mount Hotham, 6,100 feet; Mount Cobberas, 6,025 feet; Mount Gibbs, 5,764 feet; and Benambra, 4,840 feet. The average elevation of the Victorian mountains is, however, only about 3,000 feet. Snow lies on the higher portions of the Dividing Range during several months of the year. Below the winter snow-line the mountains are generally well wooded, some of the trees reaching gigantic proportions; but the peaks above this line are bare, or partially covered with stunted trees and shrubs. The scenery in some of the mountain ranges, and particularly in the Bogong Mountains, makes a deep impression on all beholders, and, as in New South Wales, the characteristics are such as are not found in any other part of the world. The first impression left on the mind at sight of these examples of Nature's handiwork is one of stupendous power, coupled with a feeling of weirdness and utter loneliness. The absolute stillness is rarely broken by the song of birds, the whirring of wings, or the cry of wild animals. Parts of these primeval ranges have never been trodden by the foot of white man, and, it is believed, were inaccessible even to the aboriginal native. Geologists affirm that the mountain ranges here belong to the very dawn of time, and, indeed, the tremendous proportions of the giant trees found in the valleys are silent witnesses to a great antiquity. Under different atmospheric conditions, the mountains present many beautiful gradations of colouring, ranging at times from deep purple to delicate blue. On

clear days the distant summits stand sharply outlined against the sky, while at other times looming through a wreath of mist and cloud, the mighty mass of the nearer elevations is strangely intensified.

The surface of Victoria is drained by two fluvial systems, the one consisting of streams which have their sources on the northward slope of the Dividing Range and flow towards the Murray, the other comprising the watercourses which have their origin on the seaward slope of the mountains and which drain into the Southern Ocean. Of the rivers comprised in the first category, the most important are as follows. The Goulburn, which has a total length of 345 miles, rises in the vicinity of Mount Matlock, and its course lies through some most picturesque country; in its upper portion it winds in and out through labyrinthine ranges whose sides are in places heavily timbered, while in others steep and bare precipices rise abruptly from the channel of the stream. Lower down it passes through stretches of rich agricultural land. Its tributaries, the Jamieson, Howqua, Seven Creeks, and Broken River all drain country possessing somewhat similar characteristics. The Loddon (225 miles) enters the Murray near Swan Hill. The Campaspe (150 miles) rises near Mount Macedon, and, after receiving the waters of the Coliban, drains some excellent agricultural land, and enters the Murray at Echuca. The Ovens has a course of 140 miles from its source in the vicinity of St. Bernard Mount till it gives up its waters to the Murray near Bundalong; its lower course runs through splendid pastoral country. Between the King River, which joins the Ovens at Wangaratta and the main stream, are situated the fertile Oxley Plains. The Mitta Mitta rises in the Bogong district at an altitude of over 2,000 feet, and after a course of 175 miles joins the Murray a few miles to the east of Albury. During its course the stream receives several tributaries, of which the most noteworthy are the Dark River on the right, and the Victoria, Bundarra, and Big Rivers on the left bank. Much of the country drained by this river is mountainous, and contains some very wild and picturesque scenery. The Avoca (163 miles) and the Wimmera (228 miles) both fail to reach the Murray, the lower courses of the rivers terminating in salt lakes or marshes.

The Snowy is the longest of the coastal rivers, and after a course of 300 miles, only 120 of which, however, are in Victoria, enters the sea near Point Ricardo. The country passed through in Victoria is wild and almost wholly unoccupied. West of the Snowy River the Tambo, Mitchell, and Latrobe drain into the lakes in the Gippsland district. The Yarra rises near Mount Baw Baw, and after a course of 150 miles enters the sea at Port Phillip. The name of the river is an aboriginal term, signifying everflowing. Its upper course lies through rough mountain country, clothed in places with magnificent forests of beech. After receiving the waters of Badger Creek, the stream emerges into a more open region, where it is joined by the river Watts. In the country drained by these tributaries there are some densely-covered forest areas,

containing magnificent specimens of *eucalyptus amygdalina*. Some of these giants of the bush reach a height of over 400 feet; in one specimen that was measured the distance from the ground to the first branch, where the tree had a diameter of 4 feet, was no less than 295 feet. Other trees measured close to the ground had a circumference of 130 feet. The leaves of the *E. amygdalina*, as well as of the *E. globulus*, which abounds in the district, yield on distillation a valuable medicinal oil. Near the sea, where the city of Melbourne stands, the stream widens considerably, and the channel has been deepened to afford increased facilities for navigation. The Hopkins (155 miles) rises in the southern slopes of the Pyrenees, and after draining some excellent pastoral country, and in addition the fertile Warrnambool district, enters the ocean near the town of Warrnambool. The Glenelg, which has a length of 280 miles, is one of the most tortuous rivers in the state; its basin contains fine pastoral country.

The lakes in the north-western district are indeterminate as to area, their size depending on the rainfall. Lake Hindmarsh in some seasons has an area of 30,000 acres, and Lake Albacuyta of 13,000 acres. These depend for their supplies on the expansion of the Wimmera River; Lake Tyrrell, 60 miles north-west of Lake Albacuyta, also owes its existence to a stream flowing into it from the south; but it has no ascertained outlet. In seasons of drought its waters dwindle considerably, and this applies also to Lake Buloke, 50 miles south of Lake Tyrrell, which has an area of 11,000 acres. On the southern side of the Dividing Range, and due north from Cape Otway, are situated Lakes Corangamite and Colac. The waters of Lake Corangamite, which is situated at an elevation of 380 feet above sea-level, are salt, and cover an area of 90 square miles. The lake is 16 miles long, and has a breadth of 8 miles in its widest part. Lake Colac, with an area of 10 square miles, is fresh. The soil in the districts surrounding these lakes is extremely fertile, and shares with the Gippsland district the claim to be considered as the garden of Victoria.

The Gippsland Lakes lie immediately to the rear of the Ninety-mile Beach, and are separated from the ocean by a narrow belt of sand interspersed with chains of salt-water lagoons. In places the lakes communicate with the sea by narrow shifting channels, and, to obviate this disability to navigation, the Victorian Government went to considerable expense in the construction of a permanent entrance. The most important of the lakes are Lake Wellington, Lake Victoria, and Lake King. Farther east is Lake Tyers, a beautiful expanse, the scenery surrounding which has been compared to that of Port Jackson and Port Stephens in New South Wales. The principal lakes, which receive the drainage of several rivers and creeks, are fresh water; they are visited by large numbers of tourists, to whom they offer many attractions. The Gippsland district is famed for its fertility, and is the home of a prosperous agricultural and pastoral population.