

**James Bonwick**



*Astronomy  
for Young  
Australians*

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# **Astronomy for Young Australians**



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**PREFACE**  
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A CHEAP edition of the "Astronomy for Young Australians" having been desired, to meet the requirements of the Public Schools of the colonies, Mr. Bonwick respectfully submits the present issue to the favourable attention of Teachers.

ST. KILDA,  
November 1, 1866.

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# **ASTRONOMY FOR YOUNG AUSTRALIANS.**

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A FINE ship was buffeting the waves, like a strong swimmer in his sport. The clouds dashed wildly to and fro, but left many wide spaces of blue to be dotted with stars. The sea was in high spirits, throwing up spray, as if to quench the bright lights that looked down so kindly upon it.

The vessel quite enjoyed the fun, and her prow bobbed in the current, and gathered up the foam to send it flying up the rigging, or leave it hissing and fuming by her sides. How skittish she was this evening, as the light clouds ran over her head, and the wind puffed her laughingly along! She was young and strong. Her timbers were tight; and her yards well braced. She had just left port, painted and clean, with a new suit of sails, and her copper as bright as a fresh-coined penny.

And where was she going? Laden with the treasures of English cotton and woollen mills, of iron-works, and other industries, she was away to the far-off land of Australia, on the other side of the round globe.

And whom had she got on board? There were sailors to manage the merry ship; there were passengers, going from the white cliffs of old England, to dwell in the gum forests of the kangaroo home.

As the shore of Britain melted away in the distance, men and women hung over the bulwarks, dreaming of sweet vales they left behind, and sighing deeply as they thought of

loved ones there. How long would it be before they saw those vales again, or smiled with friends beside that hearth of love!

The love of one's country, as the land of our friends, the joy of freedom, the defence of the right and true, is a duty as well as a delight. And those born in the new land of Australia should cherish so beautiful and healthful a home, and help to make it happy in the virtues of its people.

One little intelligent fellow, about ten years old, hung closely against his mother's dress, and caught hold of his father's hand. James knew his parents must feel sad at leaving dear ones behind; and he inwardly resolved to be a great comfort to them now by being a good, loving son.

The last speck of land was gone, and every body turned round to the ship, preparing to make that a home. Mr. and Mrs. Marple thought of their only child, for others had been left to sleep in a church-yard far away. He was their hope and joy. They determined to add to his happiness, and secure him from the evil of idle ship-life, by improving his time and his mind.

This very evening, therefore, the kind father took James beside him in a quiet corner on deck. They spoke at first of aunts and uncles, cousins and friends. Then a plunge of a porpoise turned their eyes to the sea, or a scream of sea-fowl set them talking of natural history. A sober chat followed, and a moral lesson came.

A sudden unrolling of clouds brought out such a dazzle of starry splendour, that both gazed with delight upon the ever-wondrous heavens. It was then that Mr. Marple determined, among other subjects, to make the boy



understand astronomy. This he was to do by leading the lad himself to observe; and, under his direction, to find out the laws of the universe himself.

A few stars were pointed out. There was the North Polar star, that keeps such a constant place. There were the gentle Pleiades. There was the beautiful Belt of Orion to the south. There was, too, though very near the waves to the southward, the bright Dog-star, *Sirius*.

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