



Australian Adventure: Letters from an Ambassador's Wife

Anne Clark

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From August 1965 to February 1968, during his period of service in Australia, Ambassador Edward Clark traveled in that country as no other American and probably few Australians ever have. His wife, Anne Clark, traveled with him, then wrote her observations and impressions to friends and family in the United States.

Her letters, published for the first time in this volume, reveal the isolations and involvements as well as the opportunities and the pleasures of embassy life. The etiquette of official functions at times posed problems, as in the Clarks' first black-tie dinner with the Acting Governor General, where Mrs. Clark was supposed to curtsy. "Some Ambassadors feel strongly that the representative of the President of the United States should never bend his knee (or rather his wife's) to any man. Mrs. Battle, wife of our predecessor ... put the question directly to President Kennedy. His answer to her was, 'Curtsy you must, but keep a stiff upper knee.'"

Soon, Anne Clark realized that the routine of appearances and entertainments was constant: "I do not know when I will make peace with the schedule. I am a slave to the little black book that is my calendar."

In addition to the intricacies of embassy life, the Clarks encountered much that was unfamiliar—new people, almost a new language, new flowers, new animals—even a sky with its new moon upside down. But their warm hospitality and genuine interest in things Australian attracted friends throughout the continent. Figures from the government, the church, the diplomatic circle, and everyday life, plus well-known guests from home, all become known to the reader in this perceptive account of official life from the inside.

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