

# Australians as Customers for American Manufacturers

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**S**YDNEY, New South Wales, June 29.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.) There is a big opening in Australia for American trade. The country is just ripe for the advent of our drummers. The people are friendly and every American salesman I have met is doing good business. We sell over \$12,000,000 worth of goods annually in New South Wales, or more than \$50 per family of the population. American goods are sold in all the stores and American farming implements are used on nearly every farm. Three-fourths of the reapers and mowers come from the United States. There are thousands of American plows and tens of thousands of our axes and saws. The Australians like our hatchets. They call them tomahawks and evidently think we got the pattern from the Indians. Our carpenters' tools are in demand, especially augers, bits and planes and seven-tenths of all the saws used come from Philadelphia.

## American Notions for Australians.

American notions are sold everywhere. In Townsville, in northeastern Australia, I saw patent camp chairs with the Yankee trademark on them, our cuff clasps and collar buttons are in common use and there are all sorts of knick-knacks, marked American and sold as such. I dropped into a store the other day which advertised American candies and asked the tall young lady clerk from what city they were imported. She replied they were made in Sydney, but they called them American because they thought this would make them sell better.

The Australians smoke American tobacco. They use finecut and plug, shaving off the plug for their pipes. The brands sold are almost unknown in the United States, showing that the market is quietly worked by some of our little known tobacco firms, the larger ones not realizing the extent of this market. In New Guinea our tobacco is used as money. So many plugs will buy you a dinner, a suit of clothes or a wife, the tobacco currency being more common than gold and silver. The cigars smoked by the Australians chiefly come from Manila and the trade in Philippine tobacco is growing.

I have spoken of the New Zealanders as spenders. The Australians are quite as extravagant. In New South Wales the average is over \$900 per year for each family. The people of all classes dress well and live well. The women of Melbourne know how to put on their clothes as well as those of any city of similar size in the United States. Many of them wear American shoes, paying a duty of 75 cents on every pair. They wear costly hats and bonnets and in midwinter nearly every girl has her furs. The business men, as a rule, wear silk hats and good clothes. The fitting is not quite as fine as that of our American tailors, but far better than that of London. Clothes cost about as much in Melbourne and Sydney as in New York and American styles seem to be in demand.

A great deal of our lumber comes to Australia, not only in the shape of boards and logs, but in paper, and now the Australian newspapers are printed on American wood pulp. Many of the publishers use American type. Within the past few years the linotype has been coming in and a salesman of one of the American firms tells me that he has scattered such machines throughout the colonies. He gets about \$3,500 for each machine and does a business which is largely cash.

The leading American typewriters are



HON. GEORGE W. BELL, AMERICAN CONSUL, IN HIS OFFICE AT SYDNEY.

well known here. Some of the agencies have business colleges connected with them and rent and sell machines in the same way as in America. You can buy all kinds of American cameras here and the American bicycle is to be seen everywhere. So far no wagons to speak of have been imported, but there is a good demand for parts of our carriages and wagons and I think this field might be developed.

The Australian is fond of show. He likes a good horse and a good buggy and some of the rubber tired rigs which are now being made in America might be sold here at a profit.

One of the best pushers of American trade in Australia is our consul at Sydney, George W. Bell. He is well acquainted with the markets and is doing considerable good. He tells me that many of our goods sold here are marked as made in Germany and that some of the importations come via London. This is so of fencing wire, both barbed and smooth, of which a vast deal is used, and also of silver-plated ware, watches and clocks.

In woolens, cottons and other cloths the supply comes chiefly from England and the continent. There is no attempt to push American goods of this kind and the low freight rates to Europe operate against our importations. Still a trade could be built up in American cottons, and as soon as the trans-isthmian canal is completed there will undoubtedly be large shipments of calicoes, shirtings and denims.

One of the great markets of the future for the corn of the Mississippi valley will be in Australia. The country is subject to frequent drouths and at such times food for stock is an imperative necessity. In Queensland I saw green oats straw selling for \$45 a ton, and I was told that several shiploads of corn had been imported from the Pacific states by that state to feed its cattle and sheep. There has been a great drouth and the stock has died by the thousands. One man who had 18,000 sheep and nothing to feed them paid \$40 a ton for American corn. He soaked it and then fed it, and as a result saved his flock.

One who has not visited Australia can have no idea of the need of food in time of drouth. Within the past ten years millions of sheep have died of hunger and vast numbers of thirst. This state of New South Wales had 62,000,000 sheep in 1891. It has not more than 41,000,000 now. Within ten years the number has fallen off more than 20,000,000. Estimating each sheep at \$2.50, this means a loss of \$50,000,000 in the capital stock of the squatters in one state only. There have been large losses in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. I am told that numbers of sheep die almost every year and that the losses during the past ten years have been almost continuous.

## Horrors of the Drouth.

You need not go far in Australia to hear of the horrors of the drouth. You can easily meet a man who has lost a fortune by dry weather. Men sometimes go crazy on their stations far off in the interior because the rain fails to come. They have thousands of acres and tens of thousands of sheep and they have to sit and watch the animals die before their eyes, knowing they cannot feed them. The drouths clear the land of everything green. The pastures become as bare as the roads and the sheep stagger about, nosing in the dust for the seeds of grasses and trees. Sometimes trees are cut down to give them food. One man who had 4,000 acres of land kept 100 men busy cutting off the branches of his apple, oak and other trees to feed the sheep. They eat the leaves and even the small twigs. This same man had another force skinning dead sheep and another whose business it was to lift up the sheep when they fell down and could not rise of their own accord. This is to keep them from the carrion crows, which hover about over them and pick out their eyes if they fall.

During these drouths the rabbits die as well as the sheep. They drop dead outside the rabbit fences. You may see kangaroos lying here and there dead upon the plains and I have been told that even the birds drop dead from the trees.

The Riverina country is one of the best sheep raising districts of Australia. It produces some of the finest wool and is noted for its excellent grass. In the drouth of 1895 it looked as though a fire had swept over it. The most of it was as clean as a bare ball ground. It could not have been more bare if it had been plowed. There was not a green sprout or any sign of vegetable life to be seen. Last year much the same condition prevailed in parts of Queensland. There were tracts covered

of them are flowing from 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 gallons a day.

A singular thing about the wells is that the water that comes from them is very hot. As one of the squatters says, it is hot enough to scald a dog, and, indeed, a dog that fell into the stream of one of them the other day was killed. The water is slightly salt, and it contains some soda, but the sheep drink and thrive upon it. It cools, of course, as it runs off, being conducted in ditches and pipes over the pastures.

The ditches are made with huge plows constructed of logs in the form of a V. The end is shod with iron, and a team of eight or ten oxen drags the plow along the course desired for the stream. This makes a broad furrow, forming the canal, at which the stock can drink. There are many canals of this kind from fifteen to twenty miles long and some even longer.

## Where Hens Lay Boiled Eggs.

Australia is the hottest country on record. I have ridden for miles astride the equator, but I have never found heat to compare with this. Out in the country in the dry times there appears to be little more than a sheet of brown paper between you and the lower regions and the people facetiously say that they have to feed their hens cracked ice to keep them from laying boiled eggs. The dry lands are hotter than Sahara. Much of them is desert and the sun beats vertically down upon the continent during the hottest part of the year three hours every day in traveling across it.

Australia is as long from one side to the other as from New York, to Salt Lake City, and the greater part of it is covered with granite sand. It has no cooling winds to speak of and the sand and rock bottle up the heat and give it out again. Captain Sturt, who crossed the Australian desert some years ago, records that he once hung his thermometer graduated to 127 degrees in the shade and that the mercury rose and broke the tube. The temperature must have been at least 128 degrees in the open air outside, which is said to be the highest temperature recorded in any part of the world.

For three months during that trip the temperature averaged over 101 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade and the air was so dry that Captain Sturt writes "that every screw fell out of his boxes, his combs split up into hairs, the lead dropped out of his pencils, his hair ceased to grow and his finger nails became as brittle as glass."

## Continent of Dry Land.

There is no continent which has so much dry land as Australia. It is a great dry heart, with a few patches of green about the edges. On the east side, facing the Pa-

cific is a long range of mountains, roughly speaking running north and south, and the most of the good land lies between these mountains and the sea. West of the mountains vast plateaus begin and extend on and on and on, spotted here with low rocky ranges for more than 2,000 miles. The land falls slightly as it goes toward the west, but at the end it is still 1,000 feet high. It is 2,000 feet high at the east and in the Australian Alps or the eastern range it rises to more than 7,000 feet. There is a general slope toward the south, in some places so great that the continent falls to the level of the sea, but in others it keeps an altitude of 500 and 600 feet, ending in cliffs at that height, which line the Australian high for hundreds of miles.

All the rivers flow toward the coast. The most of them are short and unavigable. There is, in fact, only one big river system in the country—that of the Murray, which flows out of the south east end of Australia. The Murray is 1,400 or 1,500 miles long. It has extensive branches something like the Mississippi-Missouri, by which it waters a vast basin, in which are some of the best sheep farms of Australia. Nearly all of its basin is taken up by squatters. The greater part of it is fenced and in certain sections the lands are worth as much as good farming lands in the United States.

## Australian Lakes Are Salt.

Australia has no fresh water lakes to speak of. Its biggest lakes are salt and there are very few of these. The most of them lie in South Australia, in what is called the lake district, a region about 1,000 miles long. At the bottom of this is Lake Torrens, about 100 miles long, with Lake Gardiner to the west of it. North of Lake Torrens is Lake Eyre, which is larger, and to the northwest Lake Amadeus, which is also of good size. All these lakes are salt. They are surrounded by flats of treacherous mud crusted with salt. Some parts of them are dry for years at a time, when a wet season will fill them and cause grass to sprout up all about them.

Most of the land north and west of the lakes is desert. If you will draw a line across the continent from the lakes to the mouth of the Victoria river you will block off one of the biggest deserts of the world. The desert block will be one-sixth as big as the whole United States and it will contain no water and no vegetation of any kind except thorny scrub and thorny grasses. This is the case with nearly all western Australia with the exception of the small settled portions at the southwest.

## Grasses and Trees.

Among other curiosities are the grasses. There are trees here which grow grass looking for all the world as if a great stump had sprouted out in grass on all sides and on the top.

The spinifex or the porcupine grass is one of the terrors of the explorer. It covers much of the sandy plains to such an extent that it is almost impossible to travel over them. It is a hard, spiny grass, which grows in little hills from one foot and a half to five feet in diameter. It is always found in the dry country and its mere existence is an evidence that there is no water nearby.

Its blades are as sharp as a needle and are very destructive to both horses and men. The horses' feet are so cut that they sometimes have to be killed or are left to die upon the desert.

But I could write much about the queer vegetation of Australia. I see new trees every day and the queerest of all is the great bottle tree, which looks for all the world like a gigantic champagne magnum with leaves growing out of the cork. Everywhere I go I see eucalyptus trees.

They are the dreariest forests that I have ever traveled through. Many of them have long thin leaves which hang downward as though they were weeping. They are always green and they shed their bark instead of their leaves. The bark hangs down for all the world like disheveled hair, making you think that all nature has gone into mourning and they are the chief mutes at the funeral. Some of them are very high, comparing with the big trees of California. There was one recently felled which measured 480 feet, said to be the largest tree of the world.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



THE AUSTRALIAN BOTTLE TREE.

with dead sheep, cattle and horses, and dead emus and kangaroos were lying here and there over the country. This and other drouths have caused a reduction in one district of 64 per cent of the sheep and other districts even more. It is said that the drouth in 1895 lightened the wool clip almost 12 per cent and it decreased the lamb crop in New South Wales about 8,000,000 head.

## Hundreds of Artesian Wells.

Within the past few years the governments of Australia have been preparing to resist these drouths. They have been sinking artesian wells, making dams and putting up water works. The drouths in many parts of the country are such that for nine months the sheep can feed on the dry grasses if they can only get water, and of late the water in many places has come from artesian wells. The chief danger has been in overstocking, so that the sheep eat all the grass and, notwithstanding the drinking water, die of starvation.

There are in Queensland alone 350 artesian wells and a number more are being put down. Already more than \$2,000,000 has been spent upon them. The aggregate depth of the wells is in the neighborhood of 500,000 feet. Some of the wells are very deep. There is one at Winton which was sunk 4,000 feet before it struck water, and there are many down 3,000 and more. One well flows 5,000,000 gallons a day, another 4,000,000 and another 2,000,000. In New South Wales a large number of bores, as they are called, have been sunk and several



ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S NEW ARTESIAN WHEELS—IT IS 4,086 FEET DEEP AND FLOWS A MILLION GALLONS OF HOT WATER PER DAY.



BOLE OF ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S GIANT TREES.