

and a number of seals, dugongs and whales, which inhabiting the ocean are not restricted to Australia. The marsupial animals, which are now extinct in almost every other part of the world, are considered by zoologists to be the oldest mammals of the world known. Fossil remains prove that their predecessors in ages past grew to enormous size, rivaling that almost of the rhinoceros. It has been estimated that there are upwards of 630 different species of birds in Australia, the largest being the emu or Australian ostrich, and the smallest the wren. Peculiar to the country are the black swan, the honey sucker, the lyre bird, the bush turkey and others. Snakes are very numerous, and though not of large size, are very venomous in character; there are upwards of sixty different species. About 140 different species of lizards have already been enumerated. In the rivers of Northern Queensland and other parts of North Australia crocodiles, locally called alligators, have been found.

There are about 15,000 miles of railways in operation in Australia, and about 100,000 miles of electric telegraph. There is an unbroken railway system penetrating the coast country of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, and branch lines leading off in all directions, some of them penetrating far into the interior.

There are in the Australian colonies about a thousand newspapers, including magazines and small class publications. In Melbourne and suburbs alone about one hundred and fifty periodicals are published.

There is no state church in Australia, though, as in England, the Episcopalians are the dominant body as regards numbers. Next in point of influence and number come the Roman Catholics, followed by Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Salvation Army and Jews. The few Latter-day Saints in the colonies are classed in the colonial year books among other "smaller sectarian bodies," including a large number of Mohammedans, Confucians and pagans. A good school system exists in all the colonies.

On December 31st, 1893, the population of Australia, according to official census, was 3,241,629. Of these, New South Wales had 1,223,370; Victoria, 1,174,022; Queensland, 432,299; South Australia, 341,978; Western Australia, 65,064, and Northern Territory (belonging to South Australia) 4,896.

The aboriginal inhabitants of Australia belong to what is termed the Ethiopic, which is the lowest family of the human race. They are ranked by ethnologists in the Papuan or Austral-negro scale, but forming a special type, and are believed by some to be the remnant of an ancient and peculiar race. No satisfactory estimate has been formed of their number, but there are at least 60,000 of them left. At the time of the first settlement by whites in Australia they numbered about 150,000, according to the best conjectures. These people in their native state have no fixed habitation; in the summer time they live almost entirely in the open air, and in the more inclement weather in bark huts of the simplest construction. Their implements are of wood, stone, or the bones of animals or fish. Their religious and intellectual condition is apparently of the lowest kind, and it is believed that they resort to cannibalism

under exceptional circumstances. They are occasionally employed by the settlers in light kinds of work and as horse breakers; but they dislike continuous occupation and soon give it up. They are also engaged by the police occasionally in tracking criminals in the bush, for which they have great aptitude. The physical characteristics of the natives have been generally described by a prominent writer as follows: "The men are tall and well formed, having broad foreheads, wide mouths, small, piercing eyes, flattened noses, thick black hair, deep chests, their lower limbs being thin and ill-developed as compared with those of average Europeans. They are remarkable for the beauty and strength of their teeth, the boldness of their carriage, and for the comparative smallness of their hands and feet. Although perfectly black, they are different in appearance from the natives of Africa, wanting the woolly hair and the great thickness of lips for which the latter is noted. The women are smaller than the men, in appearance worse looking and with frames not so well developed; they are very much abused and ill-treated by their male peers. \* \* \*

The natives' weapons consist chiefly of spears, shields, boomerangs, wooden axes and noddies or clubs. The Botany Bay natives had bows and arrows. In some parts of the country the spears are pointed with flint or stone heads and barbs, and the natives in some places use flint knives and stone hatchets or tomahawks. \* \* \* On the sea shore canoes made of bark are commonly used for fishing. \* \* \* The natives of North Queensland are fierce and bloodthirsty, and in the neighborhood of the Palmer river and Hodgekinson Diggings and further north have sacrificed many lives, particularly of the Chinese. In physique they far surpass the aborigines of the south, though in intelligence there is little to choose between them, the Australian blacks occupying probably the lowest position of the human family. The original inhabitants of New Zealand are a different class of beings altogether, they are intelligent, apt to learn and imitate, and have great natural powers of perception."

Since my arrival in Australia I have seen only one native, and he was sitting with crossed legs on the wharf at Sydney busily engaged at some handiwork peculiar to his race. Most of the natives live far in the interior of the country, and only a few reside near the thickly populated cities or towns.

The precise period of the discovery of Australia is doubtful. Old French manuscript charts bearing dates 1531 and 1542 have marked on them an extensive country to the southward of the Moluccas, under the name of Jave la Grande (Great Java), which agrees nearer with the position and extent of Terra Australia than with any other land, but the Dutch are credited with making known what had been kept secret by the Spanish and Portuguese, probably for commercial purposes. The Dutch visited the north coast of Australia in 1616; other explorations followed, and in 1622 the southwestern extremity of the continent was discovered by the captain of a Dutch ship, and by him named Cape Leeuwin (Lioness) after his vessel. The south coast was soon afterwards explored. In 1664 the continent was named New Holland by the Dutch government. In 1770 Captain James Cook,

the renowned English navigator, explored the eastern coast of Australia and took formal possession by hoisting the British flag. In 1788 the first settlement in Australia was formed at Botany Bay, in what is now New South Wales. In 1825, Queensland under the name of Moreton Bay, was settled as a portion of New South Wales, being raised into a separate colony in 1859. The Swan River settlement, the first real settlement in Western Australia, was formed in 1829; in 1851 it became a penal settlement, and so continued until 1868, when transportation of criminals ceased. Victoria, originally known as Port Phillip and forming a part of New South Wales, was first permanently colonized in 1834, and in 1851 the colony was separated from its parent, New South Wales. South Australia was colonized by emigrants from Great Britain in 1836, was made a crown colony soon afterwards, and continued thus until quite recently, when it was given responsible government.

ANDREW JENSON.

MELBOURNE, Victoria, Australia, May 8th, 1896.

### AN ICELANDER'S LETTER.

BANNACK, Montana, August 19th, 1896.—It is really enjoying for me to read the account of the missionary work that is being done here in this state. I believe that somewhat about seven years ago lots of people from Idaho and Utah went into Big Hole Basin in Beaverhead county, between twenty and thirty miles northwest from Bannack, and I think that some young Mormon people among them. Up here, it appears to me, that a good many of those who are Mormons and come here to work have to a certain extent made and done a good mission. In many cases, and in most cases, in fact, Mormons are sought for. In one instance a man had a Mormon who is somewhat lame on one leg, to herd sheep for him for some five years altogether, but he had left and gone home to Spanish Fork, Utah. While he was gone the man had some mishap with his sheep and new herders very nearly every month. Speaking about this matter he once made this remark in the presence of a good many in Bannack, "I would not swap John's lame leg for all the herders in Montana."

Last year a big cattleman in this neighborhood, who had several men working for him, had to leave his ranch for some time. Before starting he one day began by asking one of his men whether he was a Mormon, and then one after another. All made some excuse: they had been Mormons; were not themselves, but their parents had been, etc. Finally he reached one. "Are you not a Mormon?" "Yes," said the man; "what is that to you? I am a Mormon and hope I shall be."

"Then I'll let you know what it is to me," said the boss. "I have to go off on some business for some time, and I want you to take charge of everything while I am gone, and you get sixty cents more a day till I come back again." I could relate several more instances like these, but this is enough.

I see by the News that Brother Andrew Jensen will probably soon be in Europe. On his trip he will probably go to Iceland, which is my native land. I have several good friends in that land whom I want to point out to him, on the east coast. I do not know who they