

AUSTRALIA'S BLASTING HOT WAVE; TEMPERATURE RANGING UP TO 130

The Native Birds Dropped Dead From the Trees—Strong, Hot Breeze Scorched Everything in its Pathway—A "Southerly Buster" Brings Relief at Last—Dreadful Bush Fires Devastate the Country—Great Labor Conference.

[Advertiser's Special Correspondence.] Sydney, New South Wales, Feb. 12.—From Hobart, Tasmania, the coolest corner of the Commonwealth, I sent my last Australian letter. Before it was well on its way, Hobart was sweltering under a temperature of 119 degrees in the shade. And all the rest of Australia was wishing itself in Hobart—to get out by the same means.

Not since the 13th of January, nine years ago, has there been such a heat wave in Australia. The mercury ranged from 119 degrees in Southern Hobart to 130 degrees in northern districts that were really warm. It was a record-breaker in a country where a shade temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit, is a commonplace. In Sydney, the official thermometer registered only a few immaterial decimal points over 107 degrees, but that was on Observatory Hill, swept by the breeze from every corner of the harbor. On my own balcony, in a waterside suburb, it was 112. In inland suburbs, away from the harbor, it ranged from 115 to 129 degrees. And, in the heart of the city, there are law-abiding and tax-paying citizens to vouch for the statement that the mercury topped 125 degrees. It is therefore easy to believe the official reports of temperature from 120 to 130 degrees in scorching inland districts miles from sea or lake or river.

Started at Midnight.

For several days before the climax, it had been uniformly hot throughout the continent. On Friday it was a little cooler during the day. No sooner had the sun gone down, however, than a most unusual thing happened. Under the influence of a northwest wind the mercury began to rise steadily until it reached 90 degrees just before midnight. Entering into the spirit of this horse-racing people, the weather was evidently having a trial of speed under cover of the night, so that it might surprise every one by the morning of the morning. It was merely a preliminary canter for Saturday's scorching. Beginning at 3 o'clock on Saturday morning the temperature began a steady rise.

At 8 o'clock even the lazy official mercury, loafing in the shade and enjoying the breezes of Observatory Hill, had roused itself to 80 degrees; at 9 o'clock it was 82 degrees; at 10, 88 degrees; at 11, 90 degrees; at 12, 92 degrees; at 1, 94 degrees; at 2, 95 degrees. It dropped behind a bit then to get its wind in the hot-house stretch. The wind came from the north, parching, scorching, blasting everything in its path. Between 3 and 4 o'clock the mercury rose 14 degrees, from 92 to 106 degrees; and at 5 o'clock it had reached its highest—107 degrees on Observatory Hill and 125 degrees in the Strand.

It was not the clear, burning sun you get in Canada. It was turbid, sultry and stifling. At times it was little short of suffocating. A man feels that if it were a single degree hotter he could not breathe. It puts his energy elsewhere. His head grows weak, his hands heavy, his nerves and muscles are all relaxed, and his mind seems dazed with a strange climatic opiate. His head seems stuffed and his brain seems clogged. I

can compare it to nothing better than the heat that comes from a great hot-air register on a warm spring day, when the furnace is blacked unseasonably for all it is worth. Here in Sydney, there were the same waves of heat, thick and heavy and choking. They seemed to come, too, from below, not from above. Footpaths, buildings, furniture, everything around you radiated heat.

Birds Dropped Dead.

It was not the direct action of the sun, for, as a matter of fact, the sun could not be seen clearly. The air was thick, and a yellow haze settled over everything. Even the native birds dropped dead from the trees. A strong wind was blowing, but it was burning hot. It came from the scorching desert, the great interior, passed through the blazing furnaces of the bush fires that were sweeping the country districts, and issued forth laden with sand and smoke and ash and heat unspeakable.

On land and water it was the same—choking air, the same muggy, sultry heat, the same unearthly lurid haze. And the sun went down one big, blazing, blood-red ball.

The sunset brought little or no relief. The mercury fell a degree or two in the early evening, and the hot wind gradually died down. The air, however, was still heavy with haze and heat. Fortunately, it was too hot for the mosquitoes to be active. There was nothing to do but lounge on the balcony and struggle for breath. Then, suddenly, about 9 o'clock, a door slammed. Immediately every door in the house followed suit. It was a regular feu-de-joie. Blinds were set rattling, and ornamental knock-knocks were flying. The trees bent before the onslaught, and the harbor was suddenly lashed into great waves.

It was a Southerly Buster, a gloriously southerly come straight from the south pole to put to rout the fiery dragon which had been preying upon Sydney for three days. Without its southerlies, Sydney would be a far poorer place. As it is, it can count confidently on one after nearly every hot day, just about the time that the tide is turning. The meteorological reason for it is, of course, simple. The intense heat causes the air to rise, and creates an area of low pressure. This cannot be relieved by winds from the north, as the hot air is already rising. The wind from the south, however, even more intense, and the pressure even lower. So the winds of heaven restore the equilibrium by rushing in from the south, where the door waters stretch without interruption to the ice fields of the pole. That is the southerly buster, the greatest joy that Sydney has in summer.

The buster undid all the damage of the heat in Sydney—but it was not so in the country. There, bush fires had broken out in fifty different localities. In a day almost the whole state was ablaze. The hot weather of the previous week had burned the grass until it was like tinder.

What Starts the Fires.

What starts the fires is still a matter of controversy. Matches thrown aside by careless smokers, sparks from passing locomotives and neglected camp fires—these are some of the most obvious explanations. The blame for many others must be thrown on the galvanizing iron which is so largely used in Australia for roofing and fencing, for building water tanks and covering salt troughs. Country folk are told to tell you that a great number of fires

are caused by broken beer bottles, whose bottoms act as a lens and focus the sun upon the dry grass. Ask the authorities at the Government of the cultural Department, and they will tell you that simple spontaneous combustion is the cause of many of the outbreaks. Many, again, are convinced that most of the fires come from the phosphorus which, when mixed with pollard, is used all over the country as poison for the rabbits. In too many cases it is beyond doubt that the fires are willful. Many a swagman (the tramp is called in Australia) has deliberately set fire to a paddock when he has been refused work or rations. Cases have been known in which children, having heard their elders talk of great bush fires in the past, have deliberately set the grass alight to see what would happen. What actually does happen is it almost impossible to describe to those who do not know the country. The fires spread with the rapidity of an express train. Sometimes it moves along slowly at six to eight miles an hour—at other times, with the help of a fair wind it rushes ahead at

Twenty Miles an Hour.

It jumps ditches, creeks, fences, trees, wood-sheds and homesteads. This year it spread up the mountain sides and ruined many beauty spots for a generation to come. Many a settler has lost everything beyond the naked value of his land. Horses were burnt by the score, cattle by the hundred and sheep by the thousand. Fortunately, the loss of human life was small. Not more than half a dozen actually perished in the flames. On the approach of the first people took refuge in the waterholes. There, too, flocked all the snakes, reptiles and creeping things, and on the whole countryside. Many who were traveling by road were overtaken by the fire and had to fight it as best they could in some open space where they could take shelter.

I dined the other night with a lady who had probably the most exciting experience of all. Driving home on Saturday night from Wagga with one of the wealthiest sheepowners in the district, the buggy was overtaken by the fire some seven miles from the homestead. Trees, all ablaze, were crashing over the roadway, and they had to drive across the fields, picking the most open route available. The buggy itself caught fire and then the lady's dress. When it had been extinguished, she and her companion unhitched the horse and took it to a spot that had already been burnt out. No sooner had they left the vehicle than a package of cartridges in it commenced to explode. Meanwhile the heat was blinding. They struggled on to the nearest station, only to find that the homestead had been burnt out. There, however, they managed to get some water with which to bathe their eyes. At last, at daybreak on the following day, they reached their destination. For a week the lady was laid up with a severely burnt foot, and then came on to Sydney, bringing with her, as evidence of her

Terrible Experience.

not only a shattered nervous system, but, for the more materially-minded, a galvanized iron dish in which the biscuits had been carried. It was burnt and twisted and deeply embedded in the metal were hundreds of shot from the cartridges which exploded. The lady's experience is a simple one—but I fear that the terror of it can hardly be realized by any one whose nerves have not gone through one of these fires.

Her Drunken Husband Cured.

A lady, who saved her husband's home, says:—I had for a long time been thinking of trying to cure my husband's drinking habit. One day when he came home very much intoxicated, and his wife's salary was very small, I decided to try the 'Samaritan' Remedy. I bought a bottle of the 'Samaritan' Remedy, and put it in his room. He suspected a thing, and before I had given him the first course, he stopped drinking altogether. I honestly believe this remedy will cure the worst cases. FREE 54 M.P.E. and put in full particulars, testimonials and price, sent in plain sealed envelope. Correspondence accepted by Confidential Envelope stamp for reply. Address—THE SAMARITAN REMEDY CO., 23 Jordan Street, Toronto, O. Can. Also on sale by W. F. Strong & Co.

Stubborn efforts were made to check the spread of the fire by beating it out, by plowing broad spaces and by other means. But the flames raged, for the most part, uninterrupted until rain came in two or three days. New South Wales was the heaviest sufferer, but there were outbreaks, too, in other colonies, especially Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. Although many large towns were threatened, the cities themselves escaped. Here in Sydney a relief fund for the sufferers was immediately opened and amounted to several thousand pounds in a few days.

Since I came to Australia I can remember only a few weeks at a stretch when the daily press was not printing subscriptions to some relief fund. There was the Mount Kembla colliery disaster, the Townsville cyclone, the Blingamite wreck and half a dozen other catastrophes of the kind. Greatest of all catastrophes, however, was the drought, which broke up nearly two years ago. Since then the man on the land has had one good season and they were just beginning to recover their hopefulness when these bush fires ruined them again. It seems, indeed, as if Australia were never to be free from some great chastisement of Nature.

Blame Labor Party.

Nature, however, gets off with little blame. The fashionable course is to throw the blame for all national disasters upon the Labor Party. The Labor Party, by the way, has just brought to a close a conference in Sydney. There might have been, sitting humbly among the ordinary delegates, the Hon. J. C. Cusson, who was Premier of the Commonwealth a few months ago, and probably will be Premier again before many months are passed. Among the delegates, too, there was a goodly sprinkling of women, who were not content merely to cast their votes in silence. Matters of the highest moment to the Labor Party and the development of Australia, and the debates were almost invariably calm, intelligent and businesslike. The subject of the day was the reform of the franchise of the state and municipality. The ideal was officially set out in the following terms: The cultivation of an Australian sentiment, based upon a maintenance of racial purity, and the development of Australia as an enlightened and self-reliant community. The subject was full of interest to the industry to all producers by the collective ownership of monopolies, and the extension of the franchise to all citizens of the state and municipality.

To this was added a fighting platform for the Labor Party. The Labor Party are economic government, the abolition of the State Upper House, free education, the abolition of the land and progressive land value tax, a state scheme of irrigation and the conservation of the water, the establishment of a new system of local government giving power and the resumption of large pastoral estates for closer settlement, the abolition of the official programme for New South Wales, but it may illustrate the means by which the Labor Party intend to reach its settled aim of establishing itself in Australia a free, intelligent, self-contained young community.

Conference of Premiers.

Meanwhile, the various Premiers of Australia were holding a conference of their own in Hobart. Mr. Reid, the Premier of New South Wales, was the table sat Mr. Carruthers of New South Wales; Mr. Bent, of Victoria; Mr. Dwyer, of Queensland; Mr. Jenkins, of South Australia; and Mr. English, the Labor Premier of Western Australia. The subjects to be discussed were of a financial and political nature. Mr. Reid brought his treasurers with him. Sir George Turner, the financial and political leader of the Labor Party, was also present. Mr. Reid himself in the proceedings. The main subject of the conference was the question of the Federal old age pension. The Federal old age pension was agreed upon with that famous constitution known as

The "Braddon Plot."

This provides that, for the first ten years of Federation, the Commonwealth Government should not spend more than one-quarter of the revenue which it raised from customs duties and excise, and the remaining three-quarters should be returned in cash to the several states or applied towards the payment of interest on state debts taken over by the Commonwealth. Before the States Premiers would agree to the federalization of the debts, they asked that the "Braddon Plot" should be dropped. At the end of the time, the states should get three-quarters of the Commonwealth revenue. Sir George Turner refused to agree to this, and there seemed to be every prospect of the conference ending in a deadlock with nothing accomplished. Every day the State Premiers held a secret caucus of their own, and prepared their case for the joint conference. Sir George Turner was so far as offering to the States the operation of the Braddon clause to twenty years, but the States Premiers refused to accept this. It was only when Sir George quietly reminded them that the Federal Government would probably refuse to extend the Braddon clause at all that they recognized that they had better make the best bargain possible. All the Premiers, except Mr. Morgan, of Queensland, then agreed to the Commonwealth taking over the state debts and legislation will accordingly be introduced to this effect as soon as possible. The main reason for the refusal of Sir George Turner to agree to a perpetual extension of the Braddon clause was that Commonwealth expenditure is bound to increase to such an extent that one-quarter of the revenue will not be sufficient to pay the Federal bills.

A Nail Muddle.

One minister, however, who has no time for fishing parties is Mr. Sydney Smith, the Minister-General. By quarrelling with the two big English steamship lines which run through the canal, he has brought about the present nail muddle. The Imperial Government arranged for a fortnightly service with the Peninsular and Oriental Company, leaving it to the Commonwealth to arrange for a similar fortnightly service with the Orient Pacific Company, so that there might be between the mother land and Australia, a weekly mail, as heretofore. The Orient Pacific Company, however, demanded an annual subsidy of \$10,000 per annum, as



Pittsburg Dispatch.

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against \$72,000 which it got under the old contract for a similar service. Three Governments in succession refused to pay the increased price, but the blame naturally falls on the Postmaster-General in office when the old contract expired a few weeks ago. At first he feigned indifference, but when the Postmaster-General sent the mails home under the poundage system, as by any other means, he was able to do this by the Orient Pacific boat as well as by any other. The outgoing boats of the Orient Company, however, refused to carry any mail for Australia at all. The same way, the captain of the homeward-bound ship, the Captain of the homeward-bound ship, declined to guarantee to deliver them, either at a Mediterranean port or at England itself. He said that he was clearing his ship for Colombo, in the island of Ceylon, and his intention probably was to dump the mails there. The Postmaster-General declares that this is so much bluff—but that remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the commercial community is being greatly inconvenienced. The mails to a far greater extent than they do in Canada.

And now comes the news of the wreck of the finest boats of the Orient Pacific fleet. Its loss will tend to make the company regard the Australian trade any more favorably. Combined with the loss of the Australia, the loss of the Orient Pacific fleet, at Melbourne a few months ago, it gives the world an impression that the Australian coast is specially dangerous.

PREVENT DISORDER.—At the first symptom of internal disorder, Paramee's vegetable pills should be resorted to immediately. Two or three of these salutary pellets, taken before going to bed, followed by doses of one or two more, two or three nights in succession, will serve as a preventive of attacks of dyspepsia and all the discomforts which follow in the train of that fell disorder. The means are simple when the way is known.

Professor Henry Myers, in lecturing to a London audience recently, said that there was no knowledge of the depth to which the South African diamond mines would be worked. The deeper they go the richer they become. Work can be carried on now to a depth of 2,500 feet. It is thought that it might be continued to a depth of 5,000 or even 10,000 feet, if the engineering difficulties could be overcome.

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HIDDEN TREASURES IN DAVY JONES' LOCKER

HOARDS OF COIN AN BULLION BENEATH THE OCEAN.

When Davy Jones once gets treasures of gold safely into his locker he guards them more jealously than any merely human miser. And yet, as Edgar Allan Poe once wrote, one might almost trace one's way to these sunken hoards by "the trail of bones of those who have failed to find them." Five expeditions have failed to run the so-called "Kruger millions" to their lair on the Tenedos reefs, and the last of them cost the lives of 28 gallant men.

One might fill volumes with stories of these rainbow chasers, many of them startling and dramatic. No one has ever yet found the San Pedro, the five-decked Spanish galleon which sank in the Margarita Channel off the Central American coast 92 years ago, carrying untold millions in gold and jewels to the bottom of the sea. There were two chests which held over 26,000,000 in doubloons; there were gold images and precious stones almost beyond number, placed on board for safety, from Catholic churches; and there were millions of treasure to pay off the garrisons and Spanish warships along the American coast.

In all, the treasures of the San Pedro were valued at \$13,500,000. Syndicate after syndicate was formed to rescue these riches from Davy Jones' clutch; fortunes were squandered on the search, many lives were sacrificed in the chase, but all to no purpose. Davy is still gloating over his doubloons and golden images as he gloated first nearly a century ago.

Then there is the Hussar, an English man-of-war, which sailed away to the west in 1780 laden with gold to pay the British soldiers and sailors. It is said the Hussar had over \$1,000,000 aboard when she ran on a rock and sank in 70 feet of water, less than 100 yards from the shore of the East River, or more than 160 years ago, a tempest after another has been made to snatch this treasure from the deep, but so far not even the locker has been found.

Not many years after the Hussar disappeared under the water of an American river the sloop of war De Raak went to the bottom off the Delaware Capes, taking with her a rich spoil of two captured Spanish galleons laden with gold and gems of fabulous value. Governments and private individuals have vied with each other for a century in the chase of these treasures; but they still remain as seductive and elusive as the lure when Davy first laid greedy hands on them.

If any one seeks for treasure nearer home, it is to be found not many miles from the Lizard, in Cornwall, where, they say, a Spanish galleon with \$17,000,000 in her hold lies buried under the sands and rocks where the richly freighted vessel was battered to pieces by the fierce Atlantic waves. Although many companies have tried in vain to recover this submarine hoard, there is no doubt of its existence, for coins are constantly being washed up by the tide as tantalizing evidence of the richness of the coffers from which they have drifted.

In a cave in the Auckland Islands may still be recovered all the gold that the good ship General Grant was carrying when she started in 1866 on her voyage from Melbourne to London, with a passenger list of miners returning with their riches from the Ballarat diggings.

Occasionally, when Davy Jones is in an amiable mood, he will release part of his booty. When he takes care to clutch what remains more tightly still. When La Lutine, a captured French frigate, sank under the waves of the Zuydsee Zee, a little over a century ago, she took 330 bars of gold down with her. In addition to much silver bullion and £127,000, the pay of the troops in Holland. Within a year of her foundering £35,000 had been recovered; fifty years or more later she gave up another £50,000; but on the rest of her hoard—she was insured for a round £1,000,000—she still keeps a jealous guard.

And again—as evidence that Davy Jones is not quite so bad as he is pictured—of the ten boxes of gold that went down with the Alfonso XII. off the Canaries some years ago, nine have been recovered. Davy keeps the tenth—London Tit-Bits

A MEDICINE CHEST IN ITSELF.—Only the well-to-do can afford to possess a medicine chest, but Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil, which is a medicine chest in itself, is expected to afford direct communication with all countries of Europe, as well as the United States and Canada, and with all vessels on the Mediterranean, Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

The largest station for receiving and transmitting wireless messages is being erected near Pisa, Italy. On its completion, by the end of the year, it is expected to afford direct communication with all countries of Europe, as well as the United States and Canada, and with all vessels on the Mediterranean, Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

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