

adapted in respect to size, form and general character to the requirements of German builders and architects. It would no doubt greatly facilitate the development of this trade if American exporters could send an expert to confer with German dealers, architects and builders, and thereby ascertain precisely the forms, sizes, and other specifications that are best adapted to the requirements of this market.

Catalogues and price lists intended for use in this country should be in the German language and currency; dimensions in metric measurements. It is useless to offer materials measured by feet and inches to a builder who understands practically only meters and centimeters.

It will also be necessary, in this as in all other lines of export trade, to remember that Europe is not America, and that some concession must be made to German methods of business, which usually involve longer credits than are customary in the United States; but the percentage of profit here may—and should—be proportionately higher.

American staves and pine and oak lumber for flooring and general building purposes have already found a large and steadily increasing sale in this country. The imports of sawed lumber from the United States in 1897 amounted to 152,863 metric tons, besides a large quantity of wood—chiefly oak, poplar, and walnut—imported in the form of squared logs to be sawed after arrival. American lumber of the best grades is highly esteemed here for its clean, straight grain and its freedom from knots, cracks and other defects.

### BICYCLES IN HONGKONG

Probably no class of manufacturers in the United States spends more money in letters and circulars to attract foreign trade than bicycle makers. Every mail brings enquiries from different makers, all asking the same questions and requesting the same attention. The National Board of Trade of Cycle Manufacturers, New York, propounds a series of questions which so thoroughly covers the subject that I am using their letter as a guide in making this report.

To thoroughly understand this market, it is necessary to describe the highway conditions of the colony. Hongkong is built on the side of a mountain 1,800 feet high, and all streets above sea level are terraces broken by flights of steps, making the majority of them unavailable for cycling purposes. Consequently, the available roads are reduced to two, although there are numerous excursions that the daring rider can take throughout the island. The favorite, and in fact only, road for ladies borders the harbor front, and is about eight miles long. This road has a hard, metaled surface, and is beautifully kept up. The view and scenery along it is unrivaled, and the breeze that comes sweeping in from the ocean is most refreshing. Every evening from five until seven it is alive with bicyclists with the most heterogeneous lot of machines ever seen. Bicycles of all dates run side by side. The other road referred to is called the Aberdeen road, which is also eight miles long. This road contains some heavy grades which a strong rider can take, but they do not commend themselves to the majority.

This is a free port; consequently, custom-house duties do not have to be considered in the purchase of bicycles or bicycle parts. There are no real importers of bicycles, although there are two small bicycle repair shops which always keep a few on sale. On the other hand, every firm, from the largest to the smallest, handles bicycles for the convenience of customers, who are scattered all over China and the Philippine Islands. Possibly half of those which are in use here were purchased by their owners direct from San Francisco, and probably two-thirds of all the machines in use here are American. There is no favorite make, and all wheels have equal chances in this market. There has been very little money spent in advertising any particular make, in consequence of which they all go under the generic name of "bicycles," and are not distinguished by names. The Chinese, who are becoming the largest users of bicycles on this coast, are utterly indifferent to name or reputation.

To reiterate what I have repeatedly written bicycle manufacturers, what this market demands is a low-grade, low-priced machine—one that would sell for, say, \$20 gold in America wholesale. If you add, say \$3 50 freight from New York to Hongkong, the machine could be sold here at a nice profit. The high grades of American machines are at present selling in this market for \$185 Mexican, and where one could be sold at this price, one hundred at the cheaper figure would find a market. It is not necessary that the machine should even be of a late model. The 1896 make would command just as good a price as the 1899. I consider this a magnificent field for bicycle manufacturers to unload their old stock. I do not overlook the few enthusiastic riders here who are always in touch with the latest improvements, but am referring to the market as a whole. All bicycles should be fitted with brakes, lamps and bells, as the streets are crowded with rickshaws and sedan chairs, and darkness comes on almost without warning. Since the occupation of Manila by the Americans, there has been something of a boom in the bicycle trade here, as Hongkong has for years been the feeder for the Philippine Islands, as well as its warehouse. In time, of course, agencies will be opened in Manila for bicycles; but until that time arrives, Hongkong will be the distributing center.

I would not advise bicycle makers to sell indiscriminately to the unknown individual purchaser on credit, as there are no collection agencies here. The same conditions exist with regard to bicycles as to all other shipments, the shipper drawing for his shipment and negotiating his draft through a bank, with complete documents attached.

I do not wish it to be understood that by a "low-grade machine" I mean a shoddy article.—United States Consul-General Wildman, at Hongkong.

### TRADE CONDITIONS IN AUSTRALASIA.

United States Consul-General Bray at Melbourne, writes:—

The marked improvement which has obtained in the importation of goods of American manufacture into the Australasian colonies has been due primarily to the fact that our manufacturers have taken the trouble to consult and consider the requirements of the Australian importers, and have maintained a uniform standard of quality and finish in their goods, and have made few alterations in prices. In instances where quality has been deliberately varied and prices have been advanced, on the supposition that the market has been "corralled" the results have been disastrous to the exporters, and have had a reflex action on manufacturers in similar lines of business.

That these colonies present a vast opening for the introduction of our goods is evident by the fact that more than half of the agricultural implements imported are of American manufacture and origin, and those which are manufactured in these colonies are copies or travesties of the originals from the States. I propose to briefly review some of the goods which are imported into Australasia.

**Canned Meats.**—In spite of the local canning, there is a large demand for American meat, which should be encouraged and stimulated by judicious advertising and efforts.

**Baking Powder.**—Made in this country and of good quality.

**Fish.**—The canned article from the Pacific slope has absolute command of the salmon trade. The British exports are competing strongly in other lines. There is a very good opening here for tinned and other lines of fish, as the exigencies of the climate in the tropical lands cause an extensive consumption of these goods.

**Hardware.**—It is a fact that most of the household articles used in this country are imported from the United States, simply on account of their cheapness and adaptability. In heavy lines, Sheffield and Wolverhampton, and once in awhile Germany, continue to hold their own in edge tools and engineers' and blacksmiths' hammers. Carpenters' tools are entirely from the United States.

**Farm and Garden Implements.**—These are of American origin, and as long as they are neatly produced and the price