

aspect of commerce, and the low price of the goods is often the only means of competing successfully in the foreign market. Thus the Leicestershire stocking trade in one of its branches, depends upon the socks being sold in Constantinople and Syria at the rate of twopence per pair; and such a trade is only kept by ceaseless improvements in invention of machinery for the manufacture. The competitive aspect of international distributive commerce is leading more and more to the invention of machinery to lessen the cost of production, so that in many great works a large proportion of the workmen are employed in tending machines or using them, so as to reduce the cost of the manufacture. This is especially obvious in some of the great agricultural implement works of the eastern side of England, where multitudes of machines worked by steam make the many parts of costly steam ploughs, sowing, reaping, binding, and thrashing machines made for foreign and colonial requirements, which, in their turn, reduce the necessity for agricultural labour.

Another aspect of the distributive side of commercial geography is the need that the capital invested should become available again in the shortest possible time. This may be effected in many ways known in commerce, with which geography is only indirectly concerned, as in the sale of a cargo which has yet to be delivered; but it has led to utilization of the most rapid means of conveyance, by which the steam ship supersedes the sailing ship, and the train takes up the work of the canal barge. This element of speed in delivery has become a necessary condition of preserving the market from being forestalled; and, in the case of some perishable goods, of creating markets which did not exist. In this country we have had the advantage of receiving fruit from

the antipodes, especially from Tasmania, at a time when the fruit supplies of Europe are exhausted. When in Cape Town I drew attention to the facility with which fruit from South Africa might be sent to the European markets. I do not know whether my words had any influence, but within two years many South African fruits have reached this country; and grapes from the Cape are now among the cheapest and best in the London market. Trade often only needs to be started to augment, especially when the markets are supplied with commodities which were not previously available.

This consideration leads me to mention another personal experience which may be possibly not unconnected with a now common industry. About thirteen years ago I was occupied in dissecting some large alligators which had died in London, and desired to have their skins tanned into soft leather. No one of my friends among tanners had ever heard of leather made from this kind of skin; and, after seeking information through the principal channels, no one would undertake the responsibility of the experiment. Yet the trade soon became interested in the possibilities of a new industry, and within two years small tanned crocodile skins were curiosities exhibited in many shop windows in London. At the present time the skins of crocodiles, lizards, and serpents, are not only tanned but manufactured into a multitude of useful articles, which are attractive from the patterns of the reptilian ornament.

In this slight sketch of the nature of commercial geography my main endeavour has been to show that it is dominated by definite principles which should make us anxious to teach it practically with the same thoroughness as though it were one of the older sciences. Whatever interest there may be in the analytical method of