

CLIMATE.

Tropical
Australia.

THE tropic of Capricorn divides Australia into two parts ; of these the northern or inter-tropical portion contains 1,176,000 square miles, comprising half of Queensland, the Northern Territory of South Australia, and the north-western divisions of Western Australia. The whole of New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand, and Tasmania, South Australia proper, half of Queensland, and more than half of Western Australia, comprising 1,985,500 square miles, are without the tropics. In a region so extensive very great varieties of climate are naturally to be expected, but it may be stated as a general law that the climate of Australasia is milder than that of corresponding lands in the northern hemisphere. During July, which is the coldest month in these latitudes, one half of Australasia has a mean temperature ranging from 40° to 64°, and the other half from 64° to 80°. The following are the areas subject to the various average temperatures during the month referred to :—

Extra-tropical
Australia.Average winter
temperature.

| Temperature, Fahrenheit. | Area in square miles. |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 35° — 40°..... | 300 |
| 40° — 45°..... | 39,700 |
| 45° — 50°..... | 88,000 |
| 50° — 55°..... | 635,300 |
| 55° — 60°..... | 701,300 |
| 60° — 65°..... | 858,200 |
| 65° — 70°..... | 529,700 |
| 70° — 75°..... | 284,500 |
| 75° — 80°..... | 16,969 |

Average summer
temperature.

The temperature during December ranges from 50° to above 95° Fah. ; half Australia having a mean temperature below 83°.

Dividing the land into zones of average summer temperature, the following are the areas which would fall to each:—

| Temperature, Fahrenheit. | Area in square miles. |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 50° — 55°..... | 300 |
| 55° — 60°..... | 66,300 |
| 60° — 65°..... | 111,300 |
| 65° — 70°..... | 74,300 |
| 70° — 75°..... | 373,600 |
| 75° — 80°..... | 453,000 |
| 80° — 85°..... | 756,500 |
| 85° — 90°..... | 588,400 |
| 90° — 95°..... | 602,400 |
| 95° and over. | 135,400 |

Judging from the figures just given it must be conceded that a considerable area of the continent is not adapted for colonisation by European races. The region with a mean summer temperature in excess of 95° Fahr. is the interior of the Northern Territory of South Australia north of 20th parallel; and the whole of the country, excepting the seaboard, lying between the meridians of 120° and 140° and north of the 25th parallel has a mean temperature in excess of 90° Fahr.

Extreme heat of
Northern
Australia.

Climatically as well as geographically New South Wales is divided into three marked divisions. The coastal region, which is between the parallels of 28° and 37°, south latitude, has an average summer temperature ranging from 76° in the north to 67° in the south, with a winter temperature of from 51° to 56°. Taking the district generally the difference between the mean summer and mean winter temperature may be set down as averaging not more than 24°, a range smaller than is found in most other parts of the world. The famed resorts on the Mediterranean seaboard bear no comparison with the Pacific slopes of New South Wales, either for natural salubrity or for the comparative mildness of the summer and winter.

Climate of the
coast of New
South Wales.

Sydney, situated as it is midway between the extreme points of the Colony, in latitude 33° 51' S., has a mean temperature of 63°,

Climate of
Sydney.

corresponding with that of Barcelona, the great maritime city of Spain, and of Toulon, in France; the former being in latitude $44^{\circ} 22' N.$, and the latter in $43^{\circ} 7' N.$ At Sydney the mean summer temperature is slightly under 71° , and that of winter $54^{\circ} 5'$. The range is thus 16.5° Fahr. At Naples, where the mean temperature for the year is about the same as at Sydney, the summer temperature reaches a mean of 74.5° , and the mean of winter is 47.5° , with a range of 27° . Thus the summer is warmer, and the winter much colder, than at Sydney. The highest temperature in the shade ever experienced in Sydney was 106.9° , and the lowest winter temperature was 36.8° , giving a range of 70° . At Naples the range has been as great as 81° , the winter minimum falling sometimes below the freezing point.

Climate of the
Table-land.

Passing from the coast to the table-land, a distinct climatic region is entered. Cooma may be taken as illustrative of the climate of the south table-land, and Armidale of the northern. The first-named town stands in the centre of the Monaro plains, at an elevation of 2,640 feet above sea-level, and enjoys a summer as mild as either London and Paris, while its winters are far less severe. On the New England table-land, the climate of Armidale and other towns may be considered as nearly perfect as can be found. The yearly average temperature is scarcely 57° , while the summer only reaches 69° , and the winter falls to 46° , a range of temperature approximating closely to that of the famous health resorts in the south of France.

Climate of the
Western Divi-
sion.

The climatic conditions of the western districts of the Colony are entirely different from those of the other two regions, and have often been cited as disagreeable. Compared with the equable temperature of the coastal district, or of the table-land, there may appear some justification for such a reputation, but only by comparison. The climate of the great plains, in spite of the heat of part of the summer, is very healthy. The town of Bourke may be taken as an example. Seated in the midst of the great plain of the interior, it illustrates peculiarly well the defects, as well as

excellencies, of the climate of the whole region. Bourke has exactly the same latitude as Cairo, yet its mean summer temperature is 5° less, and its mean annual temperature $6\cdot5^{\circ}$ less than is the case in the Egyptian city. New Orleans also lies on the same parallel, but the American city is 4° hotter in summer. As regards winter temperature, Bourke leaves little to be desired. The mean winter reading of the thermometer is $52\cdot3^{\circ}$, and accompanied as this is by clear skies and an absence of snow, the season is both refreshing and enjoyable.

The rainfall of New South Wales varies from an annual average of 63·2 inches at Port Macquarie, on the northern coast, to 13·7 inches at Wentworth, near the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers. The coastal districts average about 48 inches of rain per annum; on the Tableland the mean rainfall is a little over 32 inches, but in the western interior it falls as low as 19 inches. The average rainfall of Sydney for the last thirty-one years was 49·23 inches.

Rainfall of New South Wales.

The climate of Victoria does not differ greatly from that of New South Wales; the heat, however, is generally less intense in summer and the cold greater in winter. Melbourne, which stands in latitude $37^{\circ} 50' S.$, has a mean temperature of $57\cdot3^{\circ}$, and therefore corresponds with Bathurst in New South Wales, Washington, in the United States, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Nice, Verona, and Madrid. The difference between summer and winter is, however, less at Melbourne than at any of the places mentioned. The mean temperature is 6° less than that of Sydney and 7° less than that of Adelaide,—the result of a long series of observations being:—spring, 57° ; autumn, $58\cdot7^{\circ}$; summer, $65\cdot3^{\circ}$; winter, $49\cdot2^{\circ}$. The highest recorded temperature in the shade at Melbourne was $110\cdot7^{\circ}$ and the lowest 27° .

The Victorian Climate.

Ballarat, the second city of Victoria, about 100 miles westerly from Melbourne, and situated at a height of about 1,400 feet above sea-level, has a minimum temperature of $29^{\circ} 2'$, and a maximum of $104^{\circ} 5'$. Sandhurst, which is about 100 miles north

Climate of Ballarat and Sandhurst.

of Melbourne, and 700 feet above the level of the sea, has a rather higher average temperature, ranging from 33° to a maximum of 109°. At Wilson's Promontory, the most southerly point of Australia, the minimum heat is 37°, and the maximum 91°.

Rainfall of
Victoria.

During the year 1890, the rainfall at Melbourne amounted to 24·24 inches, and for a series of years it averaged 25·26 inches, with an average of 130 days during the year in which rain fell. At Sandhurst, 24·85 inches fell, and 34·47 at Portland. Among the mountain ranges in Gippsland, the rainfall averages 36 inches.

The climate of
Queensland.

As about one half of the Colony of Queensland lies within the tropics, it is but natural to expect that the climate would be very warm. The temperature, however, has a less daily range than that of other countries under the same isothermal lines. This circumstance is due to the sea breezes which blow with great regularity, and temper what would otherwise be an excessive heat. The hot winds which prevail during the summer in some of the other colonies are unknown in Queensland. Of course in a territory of such large extent as that of Queensland there are many varieties of climate, and the heat is greater along the coast than on the elevated lands of the interior. In the northern parts of the colony the high temperature is very trying to persons of European descent.

Temperature of
Queensland.

The mean temperature at Brisbane, during December, January, and February, is about 77° 5', while during the months of June, July, and August, it averages about 60°. Brisbane, however, is situated near the extreme southern end of the colony, and its average temperature is considerably less than that of many of the towns further north. Thus the winter in Rockhampton averages nearly 65°, while the summer heat rises almost to 85°, and at Townsville and Normanton the average temperature is still higher.

Rainfall in
Queensland.

The average rainfall of Queensland is high, especially along the northern coast, where it ranges from 60 to 70 inches per annum. Near Brisbane about 50 to 60 inches of rain fall annually, and even on the plains of the interior from 20 to 30 inches usually fall every year.

South Australia, extending as it does over about 26° of latitude, naturally presents considerable variations of climate. The southern portions have a climate greatly resembling that of the coast of Italy. The coldest months are June, July, and August, during which the temperature is very agreeable, averaging 54° 4', 54° 5', and 53° 7' for those months respectively. On the plains slight frosts occasionally occur, and ice is sometimes seen on the highlands. The summer is the only really disagreeable portion of the year. The sun at that season has great power, and the temperature frequently reaches 100° in the shade, with hot winds blowing from the interior. The weather on the whole is remarkably dry. At Adelaide there are on an average 120 rainy days per annum; during the last fifty-two years the mean rainfall has been 21.20 inches per annum, while further north the quantity recorded was considerably less. The country is naturally very healthful, and in evidence of this it may be mentioned that no great epidemic has ever visited the colony.

Climate of South
Australia.

The climate of the Northern Territory of South Australia is extremely hot, except on the elevated table-lands. Altogether the temperature of this part of the colony is very similar to that of Northern Queensland, and the climate is equally unfavourable to Europeans. It is a fact worthy of notice that the malarial fevers which are so troublesome to the pioneers of the northern parts of Australia almost, and in some cases entirely, disappear after the land has been settled and consolidated by stock. The rainfall in the extreme north, especially in January and February, is exceedingly heavy.

Climate of the
Northern
Territory.

Western Australia has practically only two seasons. The winter, or wet season, commences in April and ends in October; the summer, or dry season, comprises the remainder of the year. During the wet season frequent and heavy rains fall, and thunderstorms with sharp showers occur in the summer. The extremes of drought and flood experienced in the other colonies are almost unknown in Western Australia, but the north-west coast is some-

The seasons in
Western
Australia.

times visited with hurricanes of great violence during the summer months. In the southern and old settled parts of the colony the mean temperature is about 64°, but in the more northern portions the heat is excessive, though the dryness of the atmosphere makes it superior to most tropical climates. Although the heat is very great during three months of the year, the nights and mornings are almost always cool, and through there being so little moisture in the air, no danger arises from camping out.

The climate of
Tasmania.

Tasmania, protected as it is by its geographical position, and by the tempering influence of the surrounding ocean, from extremes of heat or cold, enjoys an exceedingly genial climate. The greater part of the island in the settled regions is characterised by a mild and equable temperature, ranging between the extremes of 26° to 33° in winter to 78° to 98° in summer. Spring and autumn are the most pleasant seasons of the year, especially the latter, when the mean reading of the thermometer is about 57°. The richness of its flora is an evidence of the genial nature of the climate of Tasmania, while the purity of its atmosphere is proved by the small proportion of zymotic diseases recorded in the bills of mortality. The hot winds of the continent of Australia are felt in the northern parts of Tasmania only, and, even there, are greatly reduced in temperature by their passage across Bass' Straits. Generally speaking, all through the summer months there are alternate land and sea breezes which tend to cool the atmosphere even in the hottest days. The climate of Tasmania is fresh and invigorating, and is much recommended as a restorative for those whose constitutions have been enfeebled by residence in hotter climes. Large numbers of tourists in search of health visit the island every summer. The rainfall, except in the mountain districts, is moderate and regular. The average downfall at Hobart for a long series of years was 22·93 inches, with 143 wet days per annum.

Climate of New
Zealand.

The climate of New Zealand is in some respects similar to that of Tasmania, but the changes of weather and temperature are often very sudden. As the colony extends over more than 10

degrees of latitude it possesses a considerable amount of variety in regard to climate. The North Island, in this respect, is somewhat similar to Rome, Montpellier, and Milan, while the Middle or Southern Island more resembles Jersey, in the Channel Islands. The mean temperature of New Zealand is lower than that of similar latitudes in Europe, though higher than is experienced in America on corresponding parallels. The mean temperature of the South or Middle Island is less by about 6° than that of the North Island. Snow very seldom lies on the ground at the sea-level in the North Island, and only occasionally in the South Island. The summits of Ruapehu, the highest mountain in the North Island, and of the great mountain chain in the South Island, are covered with perpetual snow from an altitude of 7,500 feet above the level of the sea. Ice is occasionally seen in winter time in all parts of New Zealand. The whole colony is subject to strong breezes which frequently culminate in gales. The rainfall during 1890 was heavier in the North than in the South Island; at Te Aroha 64·1 inches of rain were registered, and 46·1 inches at Auckland, with 129 and 126 rainy days respectively, while at Dunedin the rainfall was only 26 inches, and 14·8 inches at Canterbury.

The following table illustrates the rainfall of Australasia :—

Australasian rainfall.

Rainfall, Australasia.

| Rainfall. | Rainfall area in square miles for each division. | | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| | Australia. | Tasmania. | New Zealand. | Australasia. |
| Under 10 inches ... | 1,254,400 | ..... | ..... | 1,254,400 |
| 10 to 20 „ ... | 867,200 | 9,440 | ..... | 876,640 |
| 20 to 30 „ ... | 411,300 | ..... | 69,650 | 480,950 |
| 30 to 40 „ ... | 232,100 | 8,380 | 17,410 | 257,890 |
| 40 to 50 „ ... | 144,300 | 8,380 | 17,410 | 170,090 |
| 50 to 60 „ ... | 49,300 | ..... | ..... | 49,300 |
| 60 to 70 „ ... | 57,700 | ..... | ..... | 57,700 |
| Above 70 „ ... | 14,500 | ..... | ..... | 14,500 |
| | 3,030,800 | 26,200 | 104,470 | 3,161,470 |