

AREA AND PHYSICAL CONFIGURATION.

THE Australasian colonies comprise the continent of Australia, the adjacent island of Tasmania, and the islands of New Zealand. The group was formerly subdivided politically into seven colonies ; but on the 1st January, 1901, the five mainland states and Tasmania became the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand retaining its position as a separate colony. The respective areas of the six states and New Zealand are as follow :—

State.	Area in acres.	Area in square miles.
New South Wales	198,848,000	310,700
Victoria	56,245,760	87,884
Queensland	427,838,080	668,497
South Australia	578,361,600	903,690
Western Australia	624,588,800	975,920
Tasmania	16,778,000	26,215
Commonwealth of Australia	1,902,660,240	2,972,906
New Zealand	66,861,440	104,471
Australasia	1,969,521,680	3,077,377

To the area of the Commonwealth shown in the table might be added that of New Guinea, comprising 90,000 square miles. This would bring the area of territory controlled by the Commonwealth to 3,062,906 square miles, and the total area of British Australasia to 3,167,377 square miles.

The British Empire, exclusive of territories under protectorates and spheres of influence, extends over an area of 8,856,000 square miles, so that about 35 per cent. of its area lies within the limits of Australia and New Zealand. Australasia is more than twenty-six times as large as the United Kingdom ; more than fifteen times as large as France ; more than half as large again as Russia in Europe ; and almost equal in extent to the continent of Europe or to the United States of America.