

AUSTRALIANS ARE BRITISH
TO CORE AND PROUD OF IT;
STREET CAR CALLED A TRAM

(C. Hartley Grattan in New York Sun.)

Melbourne, Australia.—When you walk the streets of an Australian city you are struck by the fact that the people you meet have a uniformly British appearance. There is no variety of types. Occasionally, to be sure, you will see a non-British person, but such a one stands out in marked contrast to the crowd. There is absolutely none of that variety of types, characteristic of an American city. Australian cities do not have foreign quarters and from top to bottom the social classes, so far as they are marked off from one another at all, are purely on an economic basis. The few Chinese that still maintain a legal residence in Australia are to be found in the "tough" sections.

It is the boast of the Australians that they are 98 per cent. British, and actual analysis of the population gives the British group as 95 per cent. of the total. Such black, brown and yellow people as are resident legally are survivors from times past. It is impossible for them to enter for residence today unless they are connected with the diplomatic service or enter under bond to do some unique thing. Negro prizefighters and theatrical people are admitted, or they were until recently, when a scandal involving white girls led to the revocation of all the labor permits granted to negroes. Australia is the most self-consciously "white" country in the world.

During the first seven months of

1927, 63,264 persons entered Australia. Of these 52,394 were classified as British. The rest included such allied peoples as Danes, Dutch and Germans, a scattering of Russians, French, Australians, etc., together with a considerable number of Greeks and Italians. The coming of the Italians, particularly, and the Greeks to a lesser extent, is the cause of an immense amount of discussion. The Greeks are a city-dwelling people and engage in small shop keeping. They are not received with open arms, but they have not yet inspired the hostility that greets the Italians.

The Italians usually go to Queensland and there engage in tropical agriculture, particularly sugar cane growing. They bring their usual capacity for hard work and have shown themselves better adapted to tropical life than the British. In consequence they have begun to displace the more easy going Australians in the growing of sugar cane. Recently there have been bitter strikes in Queensland that have added racial animosity to the already complicated economic difficulties.

The uniform composition of the population accounts, in part, for the drabness of Australian life. Mr. J. Lyng recently published, under the patronage of Melbourne University, a small book entitled "Non-Britishers in Australia." His evaluation of nationalities was based on the Nordic superiority dogma, but his last sentence read "Only the blending of individuals — Mediterraneans, Alpines, Nordics, and even colored people it

possible of assimilation into the composite body—possessing different gifts, ideas, traditions, outlook on life, characteristics, physical features and so forth, all working for the common good, makes life worth living." This is a tacit admission that Australian life lacks variety and an attribution of this fact to the lack of variety in racial types. But the average Australian is convinced that only by preserving inviolate the British tradition can a national achieve greatness, and so the newspapers picked on this last sentence to damn a useful book.

The He-Man Type.

This same conviction of the necessity of maintaining the overwhelming predominance of one racial type colors the Australian view of the United States. There is a general disposition to conclude that all the reprehensible aspects of American life proceed entirely from the fact that the country accommodates a wide variety of racial types. "Look at America!" the racial propagandists shout. "Would you have Australia follow down the same disgusting path?"

Australians are also proud of the fact that the average Australian male is a person of tremendous physique. The idea that Australians were large and powerful got about during the war. Their capacity for endurance, their initiative, their fighting spirit became traditional. By and large the tradition is true. The streets of any big city are crowded with men (and women too) who radiate good health. They are tall, straight, lean and muscular.

Australia is the sort of country that would fill the physical culture enthusiast with delight, but I do not know how it would affect his business opportunities. This is not to say, however, that there aren't small people in Australia. There are—plenty of them. It could not well be otherwise,

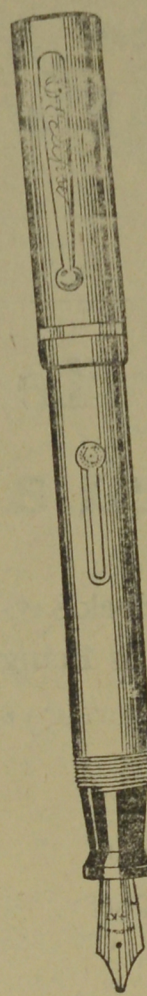
since the lower classes in Britain are not exactly noted for their size and muscularity. But though I can say nothing technical about the matter, it seems as though the Australian estimate and mode of life encouraged the production of admirable physical specimens.

The essentially British nature of the country is reflected not only in the composition of the population, but also in what we may call the mechanics of life. Business is conducted on a British basis with a slight infiltration of American ideas. The terminology employed is British. The tempo is British—leisurely. There are ironmongers, chemists (druggists) and grocers. Haberdashery is what we call notions. Street cars are trams. Elevators are lifts. It is right-o instead of certainly or sure. You sit in the stalls at the theatre. The matter of what mode of speech is peculiarly Australian is extensively debated.

Though Australians resent it extremely when they hear it asserted or see it in print, it is nevertheless true that their speech is a variation on Cockney. Though they drop their aitches almost universally, they do not ordinarily insert them at random. (Nevertheless I listened to a fourth generation Australian give a vivid description of a "haccident he was in on the 'arbor.") Words like "chynge," "gyne" and "ryce." The educationalists are making some effort to improve this situation. But in all probability isolation will produce a new version of English and that some future Australian will produce a learned tome entitled "The Australian Language." The Webster Dictionary people have already found it necessary to issue an Australian supplement.

Theatres and the Press.

In the theatre and the press the



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conflict between English and American influences is clearly discernable. When you pick up an Australian paper you will immediately notice that the shows that you can attend are partly English and partly American, sometimes more from one country than from the other, but usually balancing off pretty well. Similarly, if you take time to check the matter up, you will discover that the performers are of English and American origin, with a sprinkling of Aus-

tralian. In the musical shows, however, the ballets and choruses are almost always entirely Australian.

The theory on which the managers work is that an American show will take better if it is partly cast with English people to dilute the American atmosphere a bit. Similarly an English show needs American performers to speed it up. The balance thus achieved is supposed to have a unique appeal to the Australian audience.

(Continued on Page Three.)

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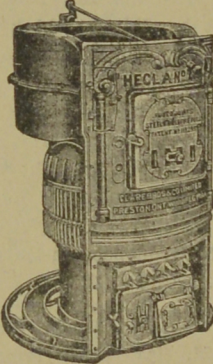
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