

Charles Dickens original manuscript 'Emigration', ca 1850, bound together with typed transcription: being an article on New South Wales as a desirable colony for emigrants, and giving advice to intending settlers, based on information supplied by Samuel Sidney, Australian writer

C 824

Emigration

Mr. Sidney says, that for such an Emigrant as I describe to him, Sydney is the place. That there, he will be able to learn the lesson he must learn, better than in any other place. That rent, clothes, and food, are cheaper there, than elsewhere; and that the emigrant and his family should be able to live there, for the first year, for about £100. I would suggest the addition of half as much more to this sum -- say £150.

In saying this, Mr Sidney does not mean (he explains) that the Emigrant should live, actually in the town of Sydney. Any place along the coast, within a hundred miles of that town, is considered in the neighbourhood, and is rendered easy of access by the steamers which are always plying to and fro, at very low fares. He recommends that the emigrant and his family should board with a settler in such a locality, for the first year. From his host he would learn colonial habits, and gain that peculiar kind of agricultural and pastoral experience which is essential to colonial success. During this term of probation, not one farthing should be spent in the acquisition of any "bargain" of any sort. Every kind of article will be offered on every kind of terms, but no stock, or implement, or commodity of any description supposed to be adapted to a settler's life should be purchased, until the emigrant is actually in possession of his land, and knows precisely what he will require.

It happens that in the Sydney Colony at this time, estates are cheap, many good ones having got into the market, in consequence of the failure of the Australian Bank, and of the recent land lotteries. The Emigrant temporarily established as here suggested, would have no difficulty (his experience first acquired) in making an advantageous purchase of land; but Mr. Sidney is not to be moved from the conclusion that this purchase ought not to be made, until after the year's probation. Supposing the Emigrant to take his capital with him, it should be invested, immediately on his arrival, in Government Debentures which yield 5 per cent, or in some other thoroughly good security. Mr. Sidney is of opinion that no thoroughly good and safe security would yield more than 6 per cent per annum.

The two best books, he considers, for an Emigrant to study, with a view to becoming wise in reference to the employment of capital, are Knight's Political Dictionary (article Emigration) and the Port Stevens Guide.

On any other points, or as distinct answers to separate questions, any information that he possesses can be readily obtained.

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Ship

I understand, on examining the papers I have got together on this head, that a ship of about 400 tons burden, register measurement, could be chartered for any port in Australia, at from £3. To £3-5-0 per ton. And this charge, as I comprehend the tables, would include the food and wages of the crew, lights, dues, and all other charges attendant on the navigation of the Vessel. For this cost, she would lie in the docks, at the charterers' disposal, for the shipment of goods, and sending on board of passengers, six weeks.

The Emigrants' Shipment Act renders it incumbent on the charterer (as common humanity and precaution against accident would, in short) to provide for the Emigrants food and fittings, viz water-casks, lightning conductors, life boat, and other necessaries. The cost of all these, for each emigrant may be stated thus:

	£	s	d
Provisions, including medical comforts	4	-	17 - 6
Fittings, &c	1	-	0 - 0

	£5	-	17 - 6

This includes every cost and requisite for every adult embarked, not being a cabin passenger.

Thus the account may be roughly stated as follows

First cost of ship of 400 ton	£	s	
at £3 – 5 – 0 pr ton			1,300
Provisions and all other necessaries, say for			
150 Emigrants		<u>881</u>	- 5
Total		2,181	- 5
<u>But</u> , 400 tons of goods on freight, at £1 – 10 – 0			
would yield		600	- 0
and reduce the charterers' expence to		_____	
		£ 1,581	- 5

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I have abstracted these results from a quantity of figures which would be very complicated and bewildering; but I have no doubt of their accuracy as far as my part in them is concerned, nor, generally, of their being correctly furnished to me. If, on this comprehensive view of the matter, you should think it well to entertain the idea still further, I can, within a few hours and at hardly any trouble, test the whole charges to within a few pounds. It appears that a freight home would not be the charterer's affair. A freight out, and the money it would yield, are, I apprehend pretty certain items on the credit side of the account.

It is not quite clear to me on the notes I have got together, whether a smaller ship would be as safe, or whether it would be as easily obtained as one of the size I have supposed. But I have not, as yet, pursued this enquiry; thinking it well to ascertain first, what your own idea of the number of Emigrants to be sent out, may be. If it should be far below the supposed number of 150, I can easily obtain satisfactory information on these two heads. In all other proportions, the cost would be the same.

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