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THE
PRESENT STATE AND PROSPECTS
OF THE
PORT PHILLIP DISTRICT
OF
NEW SOUTH WALES.

BY
CHARLES GRIFFITH, A.M.

*" Lanigeros agitare greges, hirtasque capellas,
Hic labor, hinc laudem fortis sperate coloni."*
VIRG. GEOR. LIB. III.

DUBLIN
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P R E F A C E.

THE principal object of the writer of the following pages has been to lay before the British public an unbiassed picture of Australia Felix, both as regards its physical and social state, in order to enable them to form a judgment as to its eligibility as a field for emigration. He feels that, at a period like the present, when this subject occupies so much of public attention, and has indeed become a matter of such vital importance to England, it is peculiarly desirable that the fullest information should be afforded. In doing this, he has not attempted to conceal any disadvantages under which the colony may labour, nor has he shrunk from exposing what seem to him (whether right or wrong) the errors of the systems which have been, or are still in force. If, in the performance of this ungracious task, he has inadvertently made use of expressions which may be considered strong, he disclaims, once for all, while finding fault with some of their measures, the

intention of attributing to the government, whether home or colonial, any feeling but that of zeal for the welfare of the colony.

Much of what follows was written to divert the solitude of an Australian hut, and possibly, in such a situation, some things may have appeared of an importance to which they are not entitled, and have been treated of with a detail which may prove wearisome to the general reader. Nor is the author vain enough to suppose, that mixing in the same pursuits with the majority of settlers, affected by the same interests, and having in view the same ends, he has escaped those prejudices from which no class is entirely exempt. All that he can say with confidence is, that he has not knowingly either misrepresented or exaggerated. Whether he has succeeded in attaining the end which he has proposed to himself, will be best decided by his brother colonists. Until their verdict be known, the British public must be content to take the work on trust, or at best to judge of its truth by the intrinsic evidence it may contain.

Dublin, 15th November, 1844.

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PRESENT STATE AND PROSPECTS

OF

PORT PHILLIP.

CHAPTER I.

TOWN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD OF MELBOURNE—RIVER YARRA—SOIL OF THE COUNTRY IN GENERAL—DIVISION OF IT INTO FOUR QUALITIES—COMMAND OF WATER—CLIMATE—HOT WINDS—SALUBRITY—METEOROLOGICAL TABLES—COMPARISON WITH CLIMATE OF MADEIRA, ROME, ETC.—PRODUCTIONS.

It is not until a man has seen the colonies of England that he can duly estimate her strength and resources, or appreciate the untiring energy of her sons, whose bloodless conquests have extended the empire of civilization to the furthest quarters of the globe. It has been said that Paris is France. But how much more noble is the boast of the Englishman, that England is not circumscribed by the walls of her capital, nor even by the four seas that gird her cliffs, but that wherever, under her red-cross flag, her laws are observed, her institutions retained, and her memory cherished, there England does in fact exist. That, like the banyan tree of India, she sends forth shoots through which the sap

of the old tree still circulates, but which themselves presently take root, becoming in time sources of strength and nourishment to the parent stem.

Nothing so forcibly struck me on my arrival at Port Phillip, in 1840, as the state of advancement in civilization already attained by the colony. I had frequently to pause in order to realize the fact, that where I saw a civilized town of considerable extent, supplied with most of the comforts and luxuries of life, there, only four years before, had been an untrodden wild; that where I found the bustle and excitement of business, and din of trade, so short a time before, the echoes had only been awakened by the hum of insects, or the cry of the savage; that the tame, quiet-looking teams of horses and oxen were the immediate successors of the wild dog and kangaroo, and that the substantial brick houses by which I was surrounded, had so lately superseded the rude *mi-mis** of the native. But the wonder did not stop here; for still more astonishing was it to see the comfortable villas, with their smiling gardens and thriving crops, in the neighbourhood of the town; and to reflect that not only had all this been done within such a limited space of time, but that in addition to this, a territory, superior in extent to Ireland, had been explored, occupied, and, in a great measure, stocked with sheep and cattle, during this period, while roads and lines of communication had been established, not

* The *mi-mi* is a kind of break-weather, formed of branches of trees and bark, which the natives use instead of buildings of any kind.

only through the different parts of the district itself, but had been connected with Sydney on the one hand, and with Adelaide on the other—each at a distance of about five hundred miles from the town of Melbourne, this by a population which, at the time I speak of, had not reached 10,000 souls, surrounded, too, by tribes of hostile natives. That part of this rapid growth might be attributed to the proximity of the older colonies, from whence a supply of stock was obtained with comparative ease, and that too much of it could be traced to the over-stimulus of excessive speculation, were facts with which subsequent experience made me acquainted, but which did not obtrude themselves to lessen my first surprise at the progress of the infant settlement; nor, even when I look back at this distance of time, can they destroy the feeling of admiration with which I regard the enterprise and energy of the men by whom these circumstances were turned to so much account.

The district of Port Phillip was occupied as a permanent British settlement in the year 1836, when a few huts were put up for the accommodation of the government officers, on the spot where Melbourne now stands,—a town, the population of which, at the close of 1841, was supposed to be underrated at 9000 persons.

Melbourne is built on the banks of the river Yarra, and occupies two eminences of moderate elevation, and the valley which divides them. Both of these hills slope gradually down to the river. The town covers a space of about a mile in length, by half a mile in breadth. The westernmost of these eminences, commonly called the Western Hill, is bounded on the south-

west by a declivity, which leads down to a succession of low flats, while on the south-east it slopes down to the river. The west end of the town thus occupies a corner of high ground, which rather increases in elevation for about half a mile, as it stretches to the northward. In the other direction, that is, on the river-front, there is an open valley, which, running at right angles with the river, divides the two hills which I have spoken of. Across the valley the town extends, and also up the eastern hill. The principal street, Collin's-street, running from the western limits of the town, in a direction nearly parallel to the river, crosses the valley, and stretches up the eastern hill to its eastern limits. About a quarter of a mile further on in this direction is a suburb called Collingwood. As all the other streets and lanes are either parallel to, or at right angles with Collin's-street, the plan of the town is perfectly regular, and simple enough to please the greatest lover of parallelograms.

There is great variety in the style of architecture of the buildings which compose the town, ascending, as it does, from the frail weather-boarded tenement of the first settler, to the new court house, a substantial cut-stone building, which may be taken as the extremes of a series, the mean terms of which include the baby-house-looking imported wooden house, the neat four and five roomed brick cottage, the substantial store, the flashy shop, the square solid-looking bank, the plain dissenting chapel, a gloomy and, strange to say, antique-looking Church of England church, built of a dark brown stone, and a Roman Catholic chapel of more pretension but less solidity. I am sorry to add that

the demon of Roman cement has doubled the Cape, and begun to revel in all the luxuriance of the Regent-street school of architecture. Most of the houses are built of brick, and roofed principally, I might almost say entirely, with shingles, which are imported from Van Dieman's Land. The exceptions are a few which are roofed, some with zinc, and others with Welch slate, both of which can be imported on reasonable terms.

The general appearance of the town is more that of an English country town than of any thing else to which I can compare it. The weather-boarded houses and numerous stores giving it, however, a character peculiar to itself, while the long teams of bullocks, with their wild-looking drivers, and occasionally a straggling tribe of natives, followed by a host of mangy dogs, remind you that you are not in the British isles. There is also a deficiency in that neatness for which English country towns are generally remarkable, but which is naturally to be attributed to the circumstances of the place. The streets are alternately immoderately wide and inconveniently narrow—the former being one hundred feet, the latter not more than thirty feet, in width : this gives the town a straggling appearance. Until very lately the streets were in so bad a state as to be absolutely dangerous, owing to the rain having been suffered to make channels for itself, some of which yawn most fearfully in the middle of the principal streets, and even where this is not the case, they give one in wet weather a lively idea of the condition of the world in its transition state, when it is supposed to have been the abode of the Saurian reptiles. In consequence of this state

of things many serious accidents have occurred, accompanied, in more than one instance, with loss of life. However since the establishment of the corporation an attempt has been made to improve the streets, by making drains for the water to escape. This attempt, humble as it is, has been hailed as the beginning of a better order of things, but the original error, in laying out the streets of so great a width, will always tell disadvantageously against the town, as the expense of forming them into roads, and keeping them in good repair, will always be nearly double what it would have been, had they been of a more moderate width, while in summer the dust is far greater than it would have been, had the surface on which it is formed been smaller.

The river Yarra, which I mentioned as bounding Melbourne on one side, is a deep, but rapid river of about forty or fifty yards wide, the banks of which are lined with gum-trees and mimosas. There is a natural dam across it at the place where Melbourne is built, which has been rendered more effective by art. This serves to keep the water above it fresh: this water is of excellent quality. Up to this point the tide flows, and the river is navigable for ships of two hundred tons burden; and many of the vessels from Van Dieman's Land, and the steam-boats from Sydney and Geelong, take in and discharge their cargoes at the wharf. The anchorage for ships of larger size is at Hobson's Bay, which is about seven miles from Melbourne by the river, though not more than four or five in a direct line. Between these points small steamers ply, carrying passengers to and from Williamstown, and towing up lighters

employed in discharging the cargoes of merchantmen in the bay. The Yarra is subject to heavy floods in winter and spring, but at other times presents a very uniform appearance, the volume of its stream not apparently suffering much diminution during the drought of summer. It is supposed to rise in the spurs of the snowy Alps to the eastward of Melbourne; but the impracticable nature of the country in that direction has made the exact locality a matter of conjecture.

The country in the neighbourhood of Melbourne is very picturesque, though without any decidedly prominent features, the scenery being chiefly what is characterized by painters as woodland, and by the writers on this country as open forest. There is a good deal of it which is perfectly clear of timber; other parts are wooded about as thickly as the open parts of an English park; while in those most heavily timbered the trees are generally from about ten to thirty yards apart, with grass growing under them, and the ground perfectly free from brushwood of any kind, though flowering shrubs are interspersed here and there. This is indeed the general character of the open forest-land, which occupies so large a portion of the district. Near the mouth of the river there is a belt of tea-tree scrub which borders it for a mile or two between Melbourne and the sea. On the south side of the Yarra the timber is thickest; from thence, in a north-westerly direction, the country gradually assumes a more open character; and at about four miles to the westward of Melbourne commence the plains, which, beginning about a mile beyond the Salt-water river, extend to the

westward for forty miles. Near the Salt-water river are some beautiful situations, with just enough of timber on them for ornament and use. The distant mountains, Mount Macedon to the northward, the Snowy Alps and the Dandenong range to the eastward and southward, adding much to the effect on clear days. Along the Yarra river, the Moone ponds, and also on the shores of the bay are some very beautiful views. That which from my first arrival has always struck me as the main characteristic of the country is, its remarkably civilized appearance. It is difficult when you see trees intermixed with the most graceful flowering shrubs, grouped with all the effect which a landscape gardener could desire, and growing from a green sward, entirely free from overgrowing weeds or brushwood, not to fancy that the hand of man had been engaged in combining and arranging these elements of natural beauty. If to this be added a group of cattle resting in the shade, a rustic paling, or a winding road, you have a landscape such as our English artists delight to portray. I own that before leaving England I received descriptions of the same tenor with the foregoing with considerable distrust, making allowance for the language of enthusiasm excited by novelty, and anxious to find every charm in a country which the writer had adopted as his home. I cannot therefore expect that my descriptions should obtain more implicit credence. What I have stated is, nevertheless, perfectly true.

The land throughout the district may be divided into four classes. First—Rich alluvial plots of deep brown loam, formed of decomposed trap, generally free from

timber, with the exception of a few large trees. Secondly—Plains entirely free from timber, or else thinly sprinkled over with sheoaks or stunted honeysuckle-trees; sometimes of a light reddish clay soil, mixed with sand; in others of a brown loam, but producing every where excellent food for sheep. Thirdly—Open forest, varying in fertility, but every where producing excellent food for sheep or cattle. Fourthly—Stringy bark ranges, which are in general too closely timbered to form good sheep runs, but which afford a good change for cattle in the summer. The soil is in general poor and stony on these ranges; but it is, nevertheless, here that we find the greatest variety of beautiful flowers. This division does not of course pretend to accuracy. The characteristics of the three first classes, particularly the first and third, are so frequently blended into each other, that there are many tracts of country that could with equal propriety be placed in one or the other of them—still it may be of use as a rough kind of classification.

A great part of the country from Geelong to the river Grange, on the way to Portland Bay, going the southern road by the lakes Colac, Poorambeet, and Caramgemite, and more to the southward still, towards Port Fairy, a tract of probably one hundred and fifty miles long, and varying from ten to thirty miles in breadth, consists of the first description. This is admirably adapted for cattle or tillage, but not so well calculated for sheep, which on this rich soil are apt to suffer from footrot, unless very well looked after. The second division comprises the plains, which stretch from Melbourne for about forty miles to the west, where they meet the

Brisbane range ; and from the ranges to the north of the Salt-water river, (towards Mount Macedon,) to Geelong, which is as great a distance in a north and south direction, interrupted, it is true, by a belt of forest on the banks of the Wearribbee, and by Station Peak, a mountain range which cuts them nearly across. It also comprises the Mount Elephant plains, which stretch from near Geelong to the river Hopkins. Over these latter plains the middle road from Geelong to Portland runs for three days' journey ; and the northern road from Mount Emu to the Hopkins river, a distance of forty miles. From north to south they extend from near the Pyrennees on the north to the lakes on the southward, a distance of probably more than a hundred miles. Some of the best sheep runs in the country are on these plains. Similar tracts occur on the Campaspe, and in different parts of the country ; but I have particularized these in order to give some idea of their extent. The third division occupies the far greater portion of the country, and includes every variety of woodland scenery from open lawns, with a few single trees, to that which deserves the name of forest, but the whole forming excellent pasture for sheep or cattle. Through districts of this kind are scattered many alluvial flats, some of them of great extent, which belong to the first division. The stringy bark and iron bark ranges, which form the fourth division, are but limited in extent, and are scattered through different parts of the wooded districts. They are chiefly valued as affording the best timber for fencing or building. The stringy bark, (which is a variety of the Eucalyptus,)

possessing the quality of splitting straight and freely in greater perfection than any other member of the family known in the Port Phillip district, is peculiarly valuable to the settler, who thus obtains his slabs (rough planks) for building, and his posts and rails for fencing, without the trouble and expense of sawing.

Next in importance to the soil of a country is its command of water. And here I am bound to say that, though not absolutely niggard, nature has not been so bountiful as in her gifts of soil and climate. There are in the Port Phillip district, but few rivers which flow all through the year, of which the Murray, with its tributaries, and the Yarra, are the principal. There are others which flow for eight or nine months in each year, and whose beds, even in the dry seasons, contain many deep lagoons. There are many other similar lagoons (or waterholes as they are called) in creeks, which are filled occasionally by a heavy fall of rain, and retain water for two or three years without any fresh supply. Besides this, the settlers every now and then discover springs; but with all these sources the country cannot be said to be at present plentifully watered, though were its inhabitants placed in a position to use artificial means, such as sinking wells and building tanks, (for the latter of which the undulations of the ground and the abundance of rain afford great facilities,) I have no doubt that on this head there would be no room for complaint. But, until the stockholders are given some interest in the land, it cannot be expected that any improvement of this kind can be made. This absence of permanent water-courses, though far from a desirable

feature in the country, is one of the causes which have tended to the rapid development of its resources ; there being few spots on the face of the globe where the nature of the surface would have permitted a handful of men to spread themselves as fearlessly, and to occupy such an extent of territory, as they have done in Australia, and which, of course, they could not have done had the deep rivers been more numerous.

The climate of Port Phillip is one of the circumstances which most favourably distinguish it. In winter the cold is never excessive, though the frost is generally sufficient to freeze the ponds for two or three days in each season. Snow occasionally falls, but this is of more rare occurrence. There is, however, for three or four months a considerable quantity of wet and cold weather. In summer, the heat is for the most part tempered by a cool breeze, and the nights are always cool, except during the prevalence of the hot winds ; so much so, that for nine months in the year a fire is very acceptable in the mornings and evenings. Indeed, as regards climate, the period of these hot winds is the only one that can be really complained of. They are exceedingly disagreeable, particularly to the new-comer, should he be obliged to expose himself. Fortunately, they do not occur more than six or seven times a season, and seldom last longer than a day or two at a time. They are generally succeeded by thunder and rain, accompanied by a strong southerly wind, colonially called a Brickfielder. When the south wind comes up, the change of temperature is very rapid. I have frequently known the thermometer to fall from upwards of ninety,

or even a hundred degrees, down to sixty-five in a few hours. These rapid changes do not, however, seem prejudicial to health, nor have I ever known any ill consequences to result from them. It should not be forgotten, in connexion with this subject, that though these changes are sudden, and the fall of the thermometer very great, the lowest limit is seldom below sixty degrees, somewhere about summer heat in England—a temperature most conducive to health, and one in which the animal heat is easily supported and the nervous energy suffers no depression; that the heat, though great during the hot winds, is totally unaccompanied by moisture, and that it does not continue long enough to relax the frame. Practically, the reaction in the system caused by the change is felt to be most grateful. There is no doubt that the effect of these vicissitudes might be very different if they took place under different conditions: if, for instance, the fall of the thermometer, instead of being within its present limits, were from 60° to 30° , or if the great heat were of longer duration or accompanied by a moist atmosphere. The causes of these quick transitions from heat to cold may perhaps be found in the absence of high ranges of mountains, whose ridges might form a protection against the force of the wind, and amongst whose valleys the cool blasts would have become, as it were, entangled, until they had time to be tempered with the milder air of the regions in which they had just arrived, and to absorb some warmth from the heated earth. Here there is nothing to stop the south wind from the time it leaves the icebergs of the Antarctic circle until it comes against your cheek; it is,

however, rendered mild by passing over such an expanse of ocean, and has nothing even remotely approaching to the cutting dryness of the east wind of the west of Europe. Indeed, at no time of the year has the air anything of that disagreeable harshness.

Two circumstances which, in all probability, tend in a great measure to the healthfulness of the climate are : first—the general coolness of the nights ; secondly—the circumstance that wet is invariably attended with a certain degree of cold, and that consequently there is none of that warm, moist, relaxing, muggy weather so favourable to vegetable, and so pernicious to animal, or at least to human life. Another fact may be taken into consideration, which is probably not without its influence in a country abounding with forests, namely, that none of the trees are deciduous, and that such leaves as do fall seem full of an aromatic vegetable oil, which preserves them from rotting and leaves them to crumble to powder ; and hence there are none of those accumulations of putrid vegetable matter which seem in Africa and America the fruitful sources of malaria and its attendants, ague and fever. The fact of the salubrity of the climate of New South Wales may be inferred as well from general testimony, founded on an experience of sixty years, as from returns laid on the table of the legislative council, from which it appears that the entire population of New South Wales on the 30th September, 1843, amounted to 164,026 ; the number of deaths, from the 1st of January, 1843, to that day, to 1,720, and of births to 5,387, the proportion of births being 1 in 30, and of deaths 1 in 95, for seven months ; being

a proportion of 1 in 17 and 1 in 55 respectively for twelve months. Comparing this with other statistical accounts, I find that the average proportion of deaths is

In England and Wales	. . .	1 in 60
Sweden and Holland	. . .	1 in 48
France . . . . .	. . .	1 in 40
Europe generally . . . . .	. . .	1 in 41*

It should be remembered, too, that if there were anything in the climate unfavourable to human life or health, it would be likely soon to show itself amongst the number of emigrants who from time to time arrive, and who, from the effects of a long voyage, would be of course peculiarly susceptible of injurious influences.

The following table will give a more complete view of the particulars of the meteorological phenomena :—

* An average of the proportion of deaths in the Sydney district for the twelve years ending in January, 1841, gives 1 in 53.15.—See *Mansfield's Tables*, Sydney, 1841.

ABSTRACT
 Of Meteorological Journal kept at Melbourne, and published in the Government Gazette.

	BAROMETER.						DETACHED THERMOMETER IN SHADE.						DEW POINT.	RAIN.				
	MONTHLY MEANS.				Highest Range of Barometer.	Lowest Range of Barometer.	MONTHLY MEANS.				Highest Range of Thermometer.	Lowest Range of Thermometer.				MONTHLY MEANS.	Number of Days with Rain.	Total Amount in each Month.
	Half-past Eight A.M.	Half-past Two P.M.	Sunset.	Nine P.M.			Half-past Eight A.M.	Half-past Two P.M.	Sunset.	Nine P.M.								
1842.	Inches.																	
January,	29-92	29-91	29-93	29-94	30-30	29-50	66-80	75-53	65-61	61-08	98°	51°	64-87	8	2-29			
February,	30-067	30-036	30-063	30-056	30-27	29-70	67-57	74-14	69-50	66-14	95°	57°	67-92	6	1-29			
March,	30-087	30-074	30-072	30-061	30-28	29-66	64-71	72-16	67-51	64-45	91°	56°	65-55	4	0-16			
April,	30-019	30-009	30-013	30-031	30-23	29-44	58-53	61-68	57-90	55-10	79°	49°	57-20	13	3-69			
May,	30-005	29-994	29-994	29-001	30-20	29-54	52-39	61-12	57-68	54-68	69°	43°	56-18	9	4-69			
June,	29-925	29-943	29-946	29-967	30-27	29-51	49-53	56-70	54-27	51-67	67°	44°	54-07	15	2-81			
July,	29-963	29-989	29-945	29-984	30-36	29-57	47-26	54-97	52-42	49-74	69°	34°	53	13	2-84			
August,	30-011	29-990	30-003	30-023	30-39	29-70	46-71	54-19	51-61	48-80	64°	37°	51-70	14	1-80			
September,	29-881	29-869	29-855	29-861	30-13	29-50	53-67	61-57	57-63	54-67	78°	44°	57-17	12	1-59			
October,	29-795	29-789	29-797	29-813	↑	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7-14
November,	29-867	29-825	29-830	29-834	30-13	29-33	63-93	74-46	65-40	59-10	88°	59°	67-10	5	1-22			
December,	29-913	29-899	29-899	29-911	30-16	29-48	66-35	73-32	68-00	63-67	92°	53°	64-77	8	1-74			
1843.																		
January,	29-89	29-859	29-873	29-892	30-13	29-50	63-59	76-00	68-80	63-64	93°	55°	67-22	3	0-16			
February,	29-838	29-806	29-807	29-823	30-16	29-28	66-78	76-35	71-28	66-78	93°	54°	68-46	3	3-01			
March,	29-920	29-892	29-885	29-904	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0-97
April,	30-036	29-998	29-998	30-017	30-31	29-59	57-60	65-56	63-38	59-06	83°	44°	61-06	10	1-14			
May,	30-110	30-074	30-070	30-083	30-39	29-47	51-70	62-29	59-12	54-70	80°	42°	56-87	10	1-33			
June,	29-946	29-922	29-923	29-947	30-50	29-50	49-06	55-38	53-06	50-26	69°	39°	61-45	15	1-90			
July,	29-741	29-712	29-720	29-756	30-18	29-51	47-45	54-67	52-12	48-64	61°	40°	61-00	16	1-78			
August,	29-944	29-921	29-927	29-947	30-26	29-59	47-16	54-29	53-20	49-87	66°	38°	61-29	11	3-51			
September,	29-736	29-707	29-719	29-752	30-03	29-16	50-83	58-66	55-46	51-80	81°	29°	63-80	14	2-19			
October,	29-806	29-782	29-797	29-824	30-13	29-43	58-77	63-51	58-15	54-25	86°	43°	59-45	16	1-20			
November,	29-871	29-846	29-843	29-861	30-14	29-51	63-90	70-06	62-90	59-86	87°	51°	64-12	8	1-92			
December,	29-919	29-893	29-900	29-933	30-15	29-52	64-41	70-77	65-24	62-16	98°	50°	65-90	4	2-87			

* It is possible that the dew point is not correctly ascertained, as there is a note appended to the observations to this effect:—"The wet bulb Thermometer shows what is called the dew point." without any allusion to the necessary correction.
 † Through an accident these tables are imperfect.

From these tables, as well as from a similar one for 1841, it appears that the mean temperature at Melbourne is 59 deg., and the greatest annual range of the thermometer 62 deg. The place where these observations are made is at the flag-staff close to the town, which is placed on a hill, I should think, about one hundred feet above the level of the sea, and open to the sea breeze. This circumstance, no doubt, renders the climate more equable, and tempers the extreme heat. And I find accordingly, from a table which I kept for some time at my station, that in January, 1842, the thermometer in an open verandah rose as high as 104 deg., while at Melbourne it only reached 98 deg. The place I speak of is, however, situated in a valley about forty miles inland.

On reference to an article on climate, contributed by Sir James Clark to the Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine, I find that the mean annual temperature, extreme range of thermometer, &c., at Madeira, Pisa, Rome, Naples, and Nice are as follows :—

	Latitude.	Mean annual temperature.	Extreme range of Ther- mometer.	Number of days with rain.	Annual mean quantity of rain falling.	Coldest heat on a mean of two years.	Hottest heat on a mean of two years.
Funchal in Ma- deira.....	32° 27' N.	65°	14°	73			
Paramatta (near Sydney)* ..	33° 48' S.	66°	34°			116°	33°
Melbourne	38° 19' S.	59°	62°	113	27·6 inches.	98°	36°
Naples.....	40° 31' N.	59°	28° nearly	(Rome) 117			
Rome.....	41° 53' N.						
Nice.....	43° 44' N.						
Pisa.....	44° nearly						

* The observations at Paramatta are by Rev. W. R. Clark, resident of that place.

It is evident from this comparison that it is by the greater range of the thermometer, and by the suddenness and violence of the transitions, that the climate of Australia is to be distinguished from that of the most favoured parts of Europe. That this is not a distinction by any means in its favour every one must admit. That it does not act injuriously on the health of people in general, may now be taken to be a fact established by experience. I have thrown out some suggestions as to the probable or possible causes of its not having that effect, but leave it to scientific medical men to analyse the matter more thoroughly.

Favoured with such a soil and climate, Port Phillip raises in abundance almost every product of central and southern Europe. The vine, the fig-tree, the peach, the plum, the apple, and the melon, all grow most luxuriantly, while the common vegetables, onions in particular, attain a great size and perfection. The potato, too, which is worth all the poetry of vines and fig-trees put together, flourishes in prosaic simplicity. Wheat and barley do remarkably well, oats not so well. Indian corn thrives. In fact there are few countries more prolific. One district alone, that reaching from Geelong to Port Fairy, would, if cultivated, yield wheat enough to supply millions of people; and most of the land is ready for the plough, without cutting down a single tree. This district is also plentifully watered. The relative prices of wages and flour have hitherto prevented much being done in this way. In January, 1844, we were paying £20 a year to each farm servant, together with rations of ten pounds of flour, twelve pounds of meat, a quarter of a pound of tea, and two

pounds of sugar a week: and Van Dieman's Land first flour was selling at £11, and seconds at £10 per ton. Under such circumstances it is the prevailing opinion that it does not pay to grow wheat on the squatting stations, even for their own consumption. This depends in a measure on the trouble and expense of grinding. It is necessary to send the corn to Melbourne to be ground, the charges for which are very high, or else to use a hand-mill, which takes a great deal of time. When labour falls to £10 or £12, and when greater facilities are given for the purchase of land, so as to induce persons to become agricultural farmers, it is most probable that wheat will be raised on cheaper terms by persons who apply themselves wholly to this pursuit than it can be by the squatting stockholders of the present day, and that mills will be established through the country. There are indeed some farmers of this description in the neighbourhood of Geelong and Melbourne; but they are always complaining of bad prices. This has, however, I believe, been the characteristic of farmers from the days of Horace down to the present.

CHAPTER II.

POPULATION—REPORTS AND OTHER STATISTICS—REPORTS AND REVENUE
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA—WOLLING DOWN SHEEP—EXPORT OF TALLOW—
SALT BERR—HORSES—MINORA BARK.

HAVING given a general sketch of the country and climate, I now come to the inhabitants, and their means of acquiring wealth and comfort. The population of the district of Port Phillip is estimated at 20,000; of these about 9,000 are supposed to be resident in Melbourne and its suburbs. This is far too large a proportion; in fact, the town of Melbourne is large enough to supply the wants of a rural population of 60,000 souls. This will in time cure itself, but not without considerable individual distress. At present the population is diminishing, by the inhabitants dispersing themselves over the rural districts, and there is a large number of houses unoccupied. This huddling together of a large population in a town, is the result of the present mode of disposing of crown lands, combined with the system, adopted by the Emigration Commissioners, of encouraging the emigration of artisans in preference to that of agricultural labourers, and of men with families in preference to that of single men. The artisans naturally remain in towns to seek employment in their trades, but these being soon overstocked they find it impossible to succeed in obtaining it, and if they have not energy to look for situations as farm-servants in the bush,

become discontented and miserable. Several of this class have re-emigrated to Valparaiso. Men with families are very often worse off, and, as long as the present mode of dealing with squatters remains in force, it is impossible that married men can find accommodation and employment, in any numbers, on sheep or cattle stations, as men have no fancy for laying out money in improving government land. At Sydney, where this evil has been felt more than at Melbourne, a committee of the Legislative Council examined many witnesses on the subject, and the result of their inquiries was to establish the facts which I have stated above.

The exports from the Port Phillip district in the year ending 31st July, 1843, being the close of the wool season of 1842-43, amounted to £232,602 in value, made up of the following items :—

ABSTRACT

From Tables published by Messrs. Kilburn, Brothers, Custom-house agents, from official documents.

			£	s.	d.
Shipped at Melbourne and Geelong.	Wool	3,327,763 lbs. at 1s. 3 ⁴ lb.	166,388	0	0
	Bark	903 tons at 80s. 3 ⁴ ton	3,612	0	0
	Oil	4 ¹ / ₂ tons at £24 3 ⁴ ton	104	0	0
	Sheep	27,880 at 7s. 3 ⁴ head	13,368	0	0
	Cattle	735 at £6 3 ⁴ head	4,410	0	0
	Salt Beef	1,394 cwt. at 22s. 4d. 3 ⁴ cwt.	1,509	0	0
	Tallow	1,017 cwt. at 78s. 3 ⁴ cwt.	1,423	0	0
	Hides	793 at 3s. each	237	0	0
	Horns	3,590	8	0	0
	Sheep Skins	3,526	147	0	0
	Butter	200 cwt. at 25 2s. 9d. 3 ⁴ cwt.	1,026	0	0
			£192,242	0	0
Shipped at Portland Bay, Port Fairy, and Gipps Land.*	Wool	about 600,000 lbs. at 1s. 3 ⁴ lb.	20,000	0	0
	Sheep	" 30,000 at 7s. each	7,000	0	0
	Cattle	" 560 at £6 each	3,360	0	0
			£232,602	0	0

* The shipments from Portland Bay, Port Fairy and Gipps Land are approximations furnished by the Collector of Customs, the actual returns not having been received, so that the total amount may vary slightly from the actual exports.

The amount of exportation in July, 1844, probably amounts to upwards of £300,000. This I conclude from the natural increase of the sheep, which is generally calculated at one-third of the whole amount, and from the export of tallow, which is likely to be very large, owing to the system of boiling down the surplus stock for the tallow, which is at present largely acted on. It is also likely that there will be increased activity in the export of mimosa bark, that which was sent home last year having realized a high price.

By the annual report of the Commissioners of Crown Lands the number of stock in the Port Phillip district,* on the 30th September, 1843, appears to be—

1,404,333 Sheep 100,792 Cattle 4,605 Horses.

As these returns were obtained from the settlers in July, they do not contain either the autumn or spring lambs of 1843—these probably amount to 400,000; so that taking the lambs and sheep together, about 1,800,000 fleeces have been shorn in the season of 1843-44. There are 820 stations, on which this stock is reared, the revenue derived from which by the government is as follows:—

	1843.	Estimated for 1844.
Licenses	£8,200 0 0	£9,660 0 0
Assessment	6,276 16 2	10,000 0 0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£14,476 16 2	£19,660 0 0

* In the other districts of New South Wales the return is as follows:—

	Sheep.	Cattle.	Horses.
Within the boundaries of location	1,596,417	204,266	40,184
Beyond the boundaries	1,804,016	491,841	11,796
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,400,513	796,107	51,980

The export of the wool is not entirely confined to the sheep reared on these stations, for already the squatters have pushed across the Glenelg, and formed numerous stations in a fine country to the north of a place called Port Rivoli, in the district of South Australia, and on the disputed territory between the boundaries of South Australia and Port Phillip; for even here the absurdity of bounding territories by an imaginary line has led to a dispute, probably not so grave as that of the Maine or Oregon boundary question, but quite enough to beget confusion. These men, though out of the jurisdiction of the Port Phillip Commissioners of Crown Lands, and obtaining their licenses, if any where, from Adelaide, ship their wool at Portland Bay, and draw their stores from thence.

The revenue of the district for the years ending 31st December, 1842, 1843, and the estimated revenue for 1844, are respectively as follows:—

1842.	1843.	Estimated for 1844.
£87,371 1 11	£73,724 19 10	£83,390 0 0

The falling off in the revenue in 1843 proceeded principally from the reaction occasioned by the market having been glutted in the former years by the over-importation of English goods; this will be evident from the fact that the decrease on the duty on the importation of spirits alone amounted to £5,974 8s. 8d. and on that on other foreign goods to £2,368 19s. 4½d.—these two items making up more than half the deficiency.

It is interesting, as illustrating the progress of Port Phillip, to compare the foregoing statement with one

extracted from the "South Australian Newsletter," of the 12th December, 1843, which gives some of the statistics of South Australia, and which professes to be made up from official sources: from this the following particulars are taken:—

Population 16,000; of whom 10,000 are scattered over the rural districts.

Estimated Revenue for the year 1844,	£27,900	0	0
Estimated Expenditure	28,425	0	0

Return of Stock in 1843:—

350,000 Sheep, 25,000 Cattle, 2,000 Horses.

Exports:—	£	s.	d.
Wool (exported in the season 1842—43) 854,815 lbs. at 1s. per lb.	42,740	0	0
Wheat, Flour, Barley, and Bran exported from 1st January to 31st Decr. 1843	11,510	0	0
Miscellaneous, to the end of the year (es- timated)	5,750	0	0
	<u>£60,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

The wheat is valued at 5s. per bushel, and the flour at £14 per ton, which is one-fifth too much. There is stated to be a surplus quantity of grain, amounting to 200,000 bushels.

It gives me pleasure to be able to say, that I have heard from several sources that South Australia is fast emerging from her difficulties, and that there also the revival of prosperity is attributed to the throwing overboard the Wakefield system of concentration, and giving their attention to pastoral pursuits. The British government have, however, made a free gift to South Australia of £150,000, and have allowed the governor to draw

on the treasury for about £60,000 more; while Port Phillip has not only never received one farthing of government money, but, as I shall show, has not even had the advantage of the expenditure of her own revenue, a great part of which, on the contrary, has been applied to objects in which she is in no wise interested.*

The new export of tallow is one which has been forced on the attention of the flockmasters of New South Wales, by the necessity of finding some outlet for their surplus stock, and it is one likely to produce very important results. The mode adopted is this: A man selects a number of old ewes from his flock, say five hundred, and, if necessary, fattens them for some time. These ewes, when in good condition, are driven to one of the boiling-down establishments; they are there slaughtered, and cut up into pieces of a convenient size; the bones are broken, and the whole packed closely in a wooden boiler, strongly clamped with iron: the hind legs being, however, reserved for a different use. Steam is then let on, by a pipe constructed for the purpose, and after a few hours the tallow is run off into casks, through another pipe leading from the bottom of the boiler. The refuse which remains in the boiler is then placed in a screw-press, and subjected to a high pressure, until all the tallow has been squeezed out; this is then put into an iron boiler, and refined previous to being put into casks. The wool is stripped off the skins, washed,

* The revenue of Western Australia is about £9,000 per annum.

and packed for exportation; the trotters are boiled for their oil, and the bones exported to make hafts for knives. No use is as yet made of the refuse, except as manure, or to feed pigs, which, in process of time, are to be themselves boiled down; nor is the blood (which would be valuable for the manufacture of Prussian blue) turned to any account: but the thing is as yet in its infancy. The legs are either sold in Melbourne at eight pence each, or else cured, and exported to Van Dieman's Land, as mutton hams, and as the sheep must be old and in good condition, the meat is very good. The proprietor charges one shilling for boiling down the sheep, and the legs are taken in payment at one shilling the pair; there is a small extra charge for cooperage. An old ewe, weighing about sixty pounds, when treated in this way will, if fat, yield about twenty-four pounds of tallow, worth three pence per pound in Melbourne. Taking, however, the ewes of the country at fifty pounds, you can, if they are really fat, reckon on twenty pounds of tallow, worth at the least five shillings.*

I have thought it necessary to go into the details of this process, as the matter is one of great importance to the colony, and is one on which the most conflicting statements have appeared in the Sydney papers. This system is chiefly valuable as establishing a sure market

* The tallow will probably realize 3½d. per lb. Most of what was sold in London fetched 4½d. per lb., and one penny is considered a large allowance for charges—freight is only sixty shillings a ton.

for sheep, at a minimum price. When completed, one establishment alone, near Melbourne, will be capable of boiling down 1000 sheep a day, if required; and when more economy is used in turning every part of the animal to account, probably a less charge than one shilling a head will afford ample remuneration for rendering them down. A similar experiment has been tried with cattle, but they are not found to yield so large a percentage of tallow as sheep; old ewes answer better than widders, and old cows than bullocks. There are two or three establishments for this purpose near Melbourne, one at Geelong, one at Port Fairy, and one at Portland Bay. The same system is not pursued in all, as in some the sheep are rendered down in their own fat, but that which I have described is the method most approved of. The only danger is that people may overdo the thing to such an extent as to injure the export of wool, the real mainstay of the country. As, however, the annual increase of sheep is upwards of 400,000, there will be room left for a considerable export of tallow, without producing this effect. Probably a more profitable mode of disposing of part of this tallow would be to manufacture stearine candles at Melbourne. Stearine is obtained from tallow, either by pressure, or by a chemical process. The coeline, or oily principle, which remains after the separation of the stearine, is said to produce an oil superior to sperm oil. The candles have the appearance of spermaceti candles; and might be manufactured, not only for colonial use, but for exportation: the freight and charges which now amount to one fourth of the whole value of the tallow, would of course bear a much

smaller proportion to the value of the manufactured article.

Salt beef is another article likely soon to be of importance as an article of export. No where can be seen finer natural pastures than are to be found in the fertile plains of Australia Felix; and in no part of Ireland can fat beasts be turned out in greater perfection—the mildness of the climate rendering all artificial food unnecessary. The climate, too, is favourable to the curing of meat. It is evident then that the thing can be done, and done well; the only question is whether it will pay or no; and hitherto it has been difficult to ascertain this fact, for, owing to the alteration in the tariff, salt provisions have been sent into the English market, as an experiment, from many places which probably will not continue to export them; but whether this be the case or no, at present they have equally the effect of disturbing prices, and of making it difficult to ascertain at what they will ultimately settle. Three half-pence a pound for fat beasts at the slaughter-house, or even less, will afford the Australian stockholder a very fair remuneration. But, whether the export to England pay or not, I think that we ought to be able to undersell all competitors at the Mauritius, in China, Singapore, and all through the Indian seas, besides supplying the Australian trade. Some idea of the value of this latter market may be obtained from the following consideration. The average number of ships entered inwards in the colony of New South Wales in the four years ending December 31, 1842, is 650, and the amount of tonnage 160,000, giving an average of 248 tons for

each ship: of course many of these are coasters. If the English ships were only to bring out salt provisions enough for the passage out, and were to take Australian provisions for the passage home, it would save them so much freight out, besides giving them the advantage of purchasing in a cheaper market. However this they cannot be expected to do, until the thing is so established that they can always depend on a plentiful supply of good meat at a low rate. The experiment has already been tried on a small scale, in 1842, by a company, and in 1843, by two stockholders, who only salted down their own bullocks, and the detail was managed by an overseer, hired for the purpose. But what is wanted is some man who thoroughly understands the business, who would give to it his undivided attention, and who should have sufficient capital to carry it on properly. In the hands of such a man, I have myself no doubt of its success.

Preserving meat fresh in tins hermetically closed might also, I am pretty sure, be made a very profitable business where meat of the very best quality can be had at so low a rate. Turkeys, fowls, geese, &c., might also be had on very reasonable terms; and I should think it would be worth the while of some person having sufficient capital, and who is practically acquainted with the process, to set up an establishment for this purpose at Melbourne. All extra fat might be rendered down for exportation. In this, as in the other branch of the provision trade, the Colonial, India, and China shipping would afford a market, in which we could appear with decided advantage over all competitors.

Many persons are very sanguine about the export

of horses to India, Manilla, and other places where they are in demand. The voyage from Sydney to Calcutta is on an average from two months to two months and a half; that from Melbourne would be somewhat shorter at one time of the year, and longer at another, according as the season suited for going round Cape Leewin, or through Torres straits. At present ships frequently go to India in ballast, so that the freight would not be very high. The terms on which horses have been shipped this year at Sydney have been £5 for every horse put on board, and £15 more for every one delivered safe over the ship's side. The ship provides stable fittings and water, and the owner of the horses attendance and provender. One cargo sent as a trial realized very good prices (they averaged £60); and there were few, or no casualties. It is supposed if an overland route is opened to Port Essington, the extreme northerly settlement of New South Wales, which is within fourteen days sail of China and Singapore, and one month of India, that horses may be sent with greater facility in that way. Port Essington is nearly the same distance, namely, two thousand miles, from Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. Supposing this road to be established, horses would make this journey in about two months and a half, and at little or no expense, except that of the wages and rations of the men in charge. But if this ever becomes available, the persons who will derive the greatest advantage from it will be the settlers to the north and north-west of Sydney, who would be much the nearest to the port of shipment. There is but little expense in rearing horses, and there is a fine breed of them at Port Phillip, chiefly

of Van Dieman's Land extraction, or from imported sires. I like them better than those which I have seen at Sydney. If the stockholder could reckon on £15 for the ordinary run of horses, and £25 for good ones, it would pay him well to rear them. The price at which the Indian government furnish horses to their cavalry officers is six hundred rupees, or £60. This is considered a boon to them, and allowed only under certain restrictions; but then they have the pick out of a large number of splendid colts. Still if £60 be a low price for horses in India, there is a good deal to work on between that sum and £25. One cargo of horses was also shipped this year from Sydney to Manilla, which realized about the same prices as those sent to India. Mauritius is also spoken of as a place to which it would be advantageous to send horses.

Mimosa bark has been for some time an article of export from New South Wales; but it is only lately that much attention has been paid to the mode of collecting it, so as to send it into the market in the best condition. The mimosa which yields this is the green wattle of the settlers. It is a beautiful shrub, or tree, growing to about twenty feet in height, and abounds in many parts of the district, chiefly in soils containing sand; it is pinnatifoliate with dark green leaves and clusters of golden flowers. Government charge £5 a year license for each labourer employed in stripping bark. This, together with the expense of labour in stripping, carting, and breaking the bark, and the cost of sheds to house it in, constitute the whole expense; and I am told that a large profit is reaped by those engaged in the business. At present the mode in which the bark is stripped is sufficiently rude. It is

delivered by the stripper, broken by manual labour, into pieces from four to eight inches long. Buckets full of these are thrown down into the hold, where it remains in bulk. Water-casks are then rolled over it, in order to press it a little; but still it remains a very cumbrous article. If without injury to the bark, or without danger of making it rot on the voyage home, it could be broken by a machine, similar to that known (I believe) as a devil, into very small pieces, and then put into bales well secured and pressed in a hydraulic, or a screw press, it would much economize labour in the breaking, and freight in the sending home. But it must be fully ascertained that these advantages are not gained at any sacrifice of the goodness of the article. Some attempts have been made to extract the tanning principle, but as yet the results have not been such as to lead to the expectation that this mode will supersede the simpler one of exporting the article itself. But the most economical and simplest mode of saving the expense of the exportation of bark and of hides, as well as of the importation of leather, would be to tan the hides of our own cattle to supply the Colonial market in the first instance, and to export the remainder in the form of leather. A good deal of leather is at present made at Sydney, both kangaroo-skin and ox-hide, and it is remarkable for its softness and pliancy; but still a great deal of English leather is imported, which is a perfect absurdity, while we are exporting bark and hides. I do not know any trade in which there is a better open than in that of a currier and tanner for a man who has got sufficient capital, and who thoroughly understands his business.

CHAPTER III.

THE SQUATTING SYSTEM AND ITS TENDENCIES—PRESENT PROSPECTS OF
SHEEP-FARMERS AND CATTLE-HOLDERS.

*“Quid tibi pastores Libyam, quid pascua verum
Prosequar, et raris habitata rupalis tectis?
Sæpe diem, noctemque, et totam ex ordine mensam
Pasceitur, ique pecus longa in deserta sine ullis
Hospitiis. Tantum campi jacet! Omnia secum
Armentarius Afræ agit, tectumque, Laremque,
Armaque, Amyclæumque canem, Cressamque phœtram.”*

VIR. GEORG.

FROM a consideration of the statements in the foregoing chapter, the importance of the pastoral interest to the welfare of the colony will be evident, and one would naturally have supposed that it would have been the object of our rulers to encourage those engaged in this pursuit, and to put it in their power to obtain such an interest in the land which they occupy, as would render it safe for them to erect the buildings necessary for carrying on their business in the best manner; to build for themselves, their families, and servants comfortable dwellings; by degrees to gather round them the comforts and conveniences of civilized life; and, in the beautiful metaphor of Scripture, “to make the wilderness to blossom as the rose.” But if their intention had been the very reverse of all this, they could scarcely have hit upon a more effectual mode of carrying that intention into effect than by the course which they have adopted with respect to the sale of land; which has

been an attempt to concentrate the colonists in a country not calculated, in its present condition, to support a dense population, but above all others suited to pastoral pursuits, and where common sense and experience point to dispersion as the only means of making its resources available.

The squatting system has been the necessary though monstrous result of this injudicious attempt. According to the present system of colonization, government is placed in the position of an immense monopolist of land, and as land is the only thing from which a livelihood can be derived, they can impose what terms they please upon the colonists. As the mode of deriving wealth from the land, pointed out by the peculiar circumstances of the colony, was through the medium of grazing, and as it was impossible to buy land for that purpose without paying at least £1 per acre—a price amounting to a prohibition—it followed, as logically as any conclusion in Euclid from its premises, that men, in order to prosper, must adopt some other mode of obtaining a tenure, and the squatting system was the result.

That which is commonly known as the squatting license, is a license from the crown to depasture unoccupied crown lands. For this license, £10 a year is paid to the crown, as well as a poll tax of 1d. for each sheep, 3d. for each head of cattle, and 6d. for each horse depastured under it. It is granted for a year, but is revocable at pleasure ;* and it is optional with the com-

* There is considerable doubt whether this power of revocation *within* the year, being equivalent to rendering the whole grant nugatory, is not itself void for repugnancy.

missioner to renew your license at the end of the year or not, without assigning to you any reason. If he does not like the way you wear your hat, he may refuse to do so, and you are without any *legal* redress. You may, indeed, appeal to Sir George Gipps, or you may lay your case before the secretary of state for the colonies, or petition the House of Commons, or write a letter to *The Times*; but you have no legal right to ground your case upon, no fixed tribunal to resort to, and you must appeal only to the pity of those whom you address, or to their abstract sense of justice. I do not mean to say that in practice injustice is actually done; in fact, I believe that in every case where the renewal of a license is refused, the governor requires from the commissioner of crown lands a full statement of his reasons for doing so, and gives the aggrieved person an opportunity of explanation; but, still, it is not pleasant to have one's property depending on the caprice of any man. It must be remembered, also, that from the difficulty of disposing of stock without a station, except at ruinously low prices, to deprive a man of his run almost amounts to a confiscation of his property.

In all cases it is expressly stipulated that, when the lands are purchased, the occupier is to be turned out at the end of the year, and that he is not entitled to receive one farthing's remuneration for any improvement he may have made in the way of buildings or paddocks, however suitable or however advantageous they may prove to the incoming purchaser. Nor is he entitled to any right of preemption or preference whatever, but is in no respect more favoured than a mere stranger. In

fact, the Australian squatter is nearly in the same position with what was once called the tenant in ancient demesne, who held in villenage under the crown, and the tenant by copy of court roll, who held under inferior lords. The English judges, indeed, always so favourable to liberty of tenure, by a pardonable straining of construction, afterwards held that the will of the lord was to be interpreted and controled by the custom of the manor, and by thus establishing a fixed rule, instead of the uncertain and arbitrary caprice of the lord, got rid of the villein tenure at will, which even then was felt to be intolerable to the free spirit of the people. But it is a curious illustration of the maxim that extremes meet, that an experiment, founded upon a vaunted scheme of an enlightened political economy, has resulted in establishing, at least for a time, over a large portion of the Australian continent, the servile tenures of the middle ages unmitigated by the intervention of judicial authority.* I say *established for a time*, for I should be unwilling to do any man who has reflected on the subject the injustice of supposing that he wishes the system to be permanent. If, however, they are to be got rid of, much of the prosperity of the country will depend on the way in which this is done. It is to be remembered

* There is a wide difference between the position of the Australian squatter and that of the modern tenant at will in England, for whom all improvements are made and all buildings erected, and with whom there is at least a tacit agreement that no circumstance except his failure in performing his part of the contract shall lead to an eviction. Yet even this is scarcely a fit tenure for an independent man.

that, although it is a grievance to be forced, through the conduct of a monopolist, to hold land on a bad tenure, it would be a still greater to be turned out of possession altogether—such a circumstance exposing you to almost certain ruin. It is not to be forgotten either, that something is due to the squatters; they, or those whom they represent—those (in the language of the law) whose estate they possess—are the men who in spite of toil, privation, and hardship, undeterred by difficulty and undismayed by danger, at the risk, and in many cases at the actual sacrifice of property, nay life itself, have reduced this fair country into the possession of England. It is but fair, then, that in the adjustment of this question some consideration should be given to their claims; that a preference should be given them in the purchase of land which they have improved, or adequate remuneration secured to them for their improvements. Men cannot at once forget their previous tastes and habits; and the consequence has been that many men, particularly those who are married, have laid out considerable sums upon their stations in spite of every discouragement; and it is precisely the most desirable colonist who will be the most injured unless this be done.

These may be termed the speculative evils of the system; I come now to its practical working. The first and most obvious result is, that persons of capital are either deterred from emigrating to a country where such a state of things prevails, or should they do so, they are discouraged from embarking in sheep farming, or from residing on their stations in case they purchase them.

A man with a family, who is able to afford many of the comforts of life, does not like to go and live in a hut in the bush, nor is he willing to build a good house without having any tenure of the ground on which it stands. He cannot purchase that land because it is not surveyed; and if he should succeed in getting government to survey the homestead and put it up to auction, he will have to pay, even at the minimum price, £640 for as many acres, worth probably about 5s. each, and run the risk also of losing his improvements, water, and homestead, in case any person should, for the sake of those improvements and advantages, choose to outbid him. The consequence is, that he leaves the management of his station to an overseer, while he himself resides at a villa near Melbourne.

The second result is, that the sheep-farmer is prevented from getting up his wool in as good a condition as he might, were he not prevented by the insecurity of his tenure from making the first outlay in putting up the buildings and other improvements necessary for this purpose. To wash wool clean, it is necessary that every sheep owner should have a washing place on his station; and, if possible, an artificial fall of water with a spout. This generally cannot be made without a good deal of expense. Even when the sheep are washed clean, it is impossible that they can be kept so during the process of shearing unless there be a proper shearing shed; nor can the wool when shorn be classed and sorted without a wool room. These are all expenditures which men should be encouraged to make. Many have done so at all risks, and in this respect

there has been a decided improvement through the country within the last year or two ; but it will be hard if they are not allowed the enjoyment of them. There are still, however, numbers who go upon the principle of not laying out one farthing which they can help on government land. That this is a practical evil, exercising at this moment an extensive influence on the welfare of the colony, no man will deny who has seen the imperfect mode in which too many of the sheep in the Port Phillip district are washed, or the wretched huts in which the operation of shearing is sometimes performed ; nor can any one who looks at the returns of the London wool sales fail to recognize its injurious effects in the comparatively low prices of Port Phillip wools. There is no natural obstacle to the growing of wool in that district fit to compete with most of the German wools. In no part of the world can sheep thrive better, and the fleece is admitted to be remarkably soft and healthy. There is an excellent breed of sheep, fine woolled enough for most purposes of manufacture, and which can be brought to almost any required degree of fineness, by crossing with the pure Saxon merino, several flocks of which exist in the country.

The construction of tanks and the sinking of wells are almost altogether neglected under the present system. In a few instances, indeed, men have sunk wells near their homesteads, for the convenience of having a supply of water close at hand ; but these are rare exceptions. There are thousands of square miles of country now perfectly useless, which would be available if this were extensively done ; but it is the interest of a

squatter to conceal a spring rather than to dig a well, and men's actions will in the main square with their interests.

I have spoken of the consequences of the squatting tenure only as they affect sheep farming, that being a subject with which I am practically acquainted; and I know the inconveniences of it, having myself suffered under them; but they affect the cattle holder nearly in a similar manner, and the breed of cattle is already beginning to deteriorate from the want of paddocks to keep the heifers separate from the rest of the herd.

I have thus given a summary of the drawbacks of a squatter's position as regards tenure, which, however, are capable of being removed by legislative enactment, and which, I trust, are but temporary. Every statement which I have made, I could substantiate by evidence taken before the committees of the Legislative Council of New South Wales did I think it necessary; but the evils which I have pointed out seem to me to result so naturally from the facts admitted on all hands, that such a course appears superfluous.

I will now give, as nearly as I can, an account of the prospects of the sheep farmer, in a pecuniary point of view. These, I am happy to say, are of a cheering kind, and after so long a growl, it is a relief to turn to a more pleasing subject. Persons who know but little of the colony, and who have only heard that money matters have been in a state of great confusion, will be surprized to hear that sheep farming at present promises to be a more remunerating employment than it has been for the last four years, or, indeed, than it has ever been in the Port Phillip district. In 1840, ewes were selling at from about 20s. to 25s. a head without station; from

5s. to 7s. is now considered a very good price for any number of them, with station given in. Wedders then fetched about 20s. These now bring about 5s. or 6s. Wool was then bringing from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 6d. in Melbourne; this year it has ranged from 8d. to 1s. But it was not the Port Phillip sheep farmers who reaped the benefit of these high prices of sheep, but those of Van Dieman's Land and Sydney. The former, on the contrary, were either purchasing, or at any rate doing all they could to increase their stock, in the futile hope that those high prices would continue. On the other hand, shepherd's wages were from £40 to £45 per annum. Flour varied from £28 to £40 per ton, and sometimes rose as high as £60. Sugar sold at from £35 to £40 per ton; and tea at from £10 to £15 per chest of 64lbs. In January, 1844, shepherd's wages were £20 a year, and were likely to fall to £15; flour was £10 a ton; sugar £16 to £18 per ton; tea about £5 per chest. Wages were in fact less than one half, and rations* one third what they were in 1840

* Calculation of rations for a year for one man:—

		1840	£	s.	d.
Rations	{ Flour 10lbs per week, 520lbs at £20 per ton		7	16	0
out of	{ Sugar 2lbs " 104lbs at £40 "		1	17	1
Pocket.	{ Tea ½lb " 13lbs at £13 per chest		2	8	9
			<hr/>		
Based on			13	1	10
Station.	{ Mutton 12lbs " at 4½d. per lb		11	14	0
			<hr/>		
			23	15	10
		1844	£	s.	d.
Rations	{ Flour 10lbs per week, 520lbs at £10 per ton		2	12	0
out of	{ Sugar 2lbs " 104lbs at £20 "		0	18	6
Pocket.	{ Tea ½lb " 13lbs at £5 5s. per chest		0	13	0
			<hr/>		
Based on			4	3	6
Station.	{ Mutton 12lbs " at 1½d. per lb		3	5	0
			<hr/>		
			7	8	6

and 1841. The prices of working bullocks, drays, &c. bear about the same proportion, and horses have fallen to about one fourth their former value. At that time too, much more labour was employed in the care of the same number of stock than is now found to be necessary. The flocks then varied from about 500 to 800 ; the latter number being considered a large one. They now average nearly 1,200. There are few flocks of breeding ewes less than 1,000, and the dry flocks vary from 1,200 to 1,800. The whole number of sheep on each station was at that time much smaller, so that, what may be called the staff of the station, the bullock drivers, spare hands, and overseer, if any, bore a larger proportion to the numbers and actual returns of the sheep. Taking these persons into consideration, the number of men to 600 sheep was at least two. Reckoning wages at £40 per annum, and rations at £12 out of pocket, 600 clean sheep cost at that time, at a very moderate calculation, £104 in mere labour, without allowing anything for license, assessment, shearing, and washing, wear and tear of hurdles, drays, &c. and contingent expenses of all kinds. The return from these sheep, averaging each fleece at 2½lbs, and the wool at 1s. 4d. per lb, was £109 16s. 8d., say £110, leaving only £6 to go towards defraying the expenses enumerated above. At present, two men are employed about 1,200 sheep ; this will cost £20 each for wages, and £5 out of pocket for rations. This gives £50 as the expense in labour for 1,200 sheep. The return from these, taking the fleece at 2½lbs, and the wool at 11d. per lb, will be £151 1s. 8d., say £150, leaving £100, which would

yield a fair profit, after paying their share of contingent expenses.

In former times, the number of sheep was so small, comparatively speaking, and the return from the wool, even at those good prices, bore so small a proportion to the expected profits from the increase, that the former was looked upon as a matter of very secondary consideration, while now it is become the object of principal attention. Hence arises the improvement which is rapidly taking place in the condition in which it is sent into the market. Hence, too, the obstacles which are placed in the way of that improvement by the squatting tenure are more felt now than under the old system of management, and will continue to be more and more so every year. Formerly the object was to increase the number of sheep with but little regard to their quality; but now, in order to make them pay, it is necessary constantly to cull the flocks, and to keep nothing but such as are in the highest order, and yield the most profitable fleece. The plan of boiling down here comes in aid of the stockholder, and thus, if not carried to an injudicious length, will serve, rather than injure, the export of wool, by improving its average quality, though to a certain extent diminishing the quantity.

But the greatest improvement which has taken place in the management of sheep, has been in the extent to which scab has been eradicated. This is the greatest enemy of the sheep farmer. Sheep when scabby, must be run in small flocks, and constant trouble and great expense gone to in dressing them. Many men have in this way spent more on their sheep than they would

now fetch. It can, however, be eradicated almost with certainty in six months, or a year at furthest, if proper means are used, and if there is room enough to give the sheep clean ground to run on. Foot rot is very troublesome in the western and southern parts of the district towards Port Fairy and Portland Bay. Catarrh, the great scourge of the Sydney district, is unknown in Port Phillip. Some time ago, indeed, I heard rumours of its having attacked some flocks in the neighbourhood of the Campaspè, but I never heard more of it.

When we consider the class of men who have embarked in sheep-farming, without the least previous knowledge on the subject, the wonder is not that there have been mistakes and mismanagement, but that there has been so little of them. Officers of the army and navy, retired barristers, half-pay linen-drapers, doctors, quakers, captains of whalers, merchants, and traders—in fact, men of all professions, and the most opposite pursuits, are to be found settled upon their stations in the bush, and seem in general as equal to the management of them as men brought up to rural occupations in England. Those who have managed to steer clear of debt will now do very well. But many bought their sheep originally on long credit, and at high prices, hoping to be able to sell them again at the same rate, so as to meet their bills, and to be able to retain the increase. All these men, I need scarcely say, are insolvent. Others purchased to the utmost of their means, and had to go in debt for stores to the merchant who supplied them, who was enabled to charge what he liked, and to take the wool in payment at his own va-

luation. This also was a ruinous system. The failure of the settlers of these two classes has thrown so many sheep into the market, that it has had the effect of making them fetch less than they are entitled to do, reference being had to the profits to be derived from them; and I have not the slightest doubt that a reaction will take place. The present state of things is, however, an advantage to the newly-arrived settler, who can buy his stock now for less than they are intrinsically worth; and any man of common sense and industry who could land now at Melbourne with £2,000 in his pocket, might secure to himself and family a comfortable independence, and, if he chooses to run the risk of laying out about £100 in building a good hut and offices, and making a garden at his station, might live as comfortably as he could in any part of the world, as long at least as government leave him his run. Two young men as partners, with the same, or even a less sum, might of course do the same. In the first place, they could buy 4,000 clean sheep, with station, for £1,000; bullock dray, bullocks, horses, and other expenses would amount to about £200 more. The remaining £800 ought to be put into the bank at 3 per cent bank interest, so as to be at hand to buy stores, pay wages, and meet contingencies of all kinds. The following is, as nearly as I can give it, a fair statement of the expenses and returns of such a station for two years, without exaggeration on one side or the other.

We will suppose that the stock (4,000 in all) consists of 2,400 breeding ewes and 600 hogget ewes, which would form three flocks, the remaining 1,000 consisting

of wedder lambs and rams, would form the fourth flock:—

EXPENSES.		FIRST YEAR.		RETURNS.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
4 shepherd's wages, £20, rations £5 each	100	0	0	Wool of 4,000 sheep, at 3½lbs. each fleece, 14,000 lbs. at 11d. per lb.	504	3	4
2 hut keepers, 1 extra man, £20, rations £5 each	75	0	0	Wool of 2,000 lambs, dropped in April and May, at 1½lbs. each fleece, 3,000lbs. at 1s. per lb.	150	0	0
Bullock driver £25, rations £5	30	0	0				
Working overseer £40, rations £5	45	0	0				
Total wages and rations	350	0	0				
License and assessment	28	14	4				
Shearing and washing	40	0	0				
Travelling expenses, wear and tear of hurdles, &c.	100	0	0				
Rations, &c. for owner	30	0	0				
	446	13	4				
Balance	207	10	0				
	654	3	4		654	3	4

Next year there would be about 5,850 sheep on the station, allowing 100 widders for consumption, and 50 sheep of all kinds for casualties. We will suppose, however, that there are 6,000 sheep, for the sake of round numbers. They might be disposed of as follows:—

3,000 breeding ewes, 3 flocks; 1,500 lambs, 1 flock; 1,000 widders, and 500 widder lambs, 1 flock: being 5 flocks in all.

* The prices obtained for wool in the summer sales of 1844 were fully 4d. per lb. more than those of 1843, upon which this calculation is formed, which would of course give a still larger return to the sheep farmer.

SECOND YEAR.

EXPENSES.		RETURNS.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
6 Shepherds at £20 wages and £5 rations	125 0 0	Wool of 6,000 sheep, averaging as before, 16,500lbs. at 11d. per lb.	756 1 8
3 hut-keepers, and 1 extra man	100 0 0	Wool of 2,500 lambs, averaging as before, 3,125lbs. at 1s. per lb.	156 5 0
1 bullock-driver	30 0 0	400 widders, sold at 5s. each after shearing	100 0 0
Working overseer	45 0 0	200 ewes boiled down, at 5s. each	50 0 0
	800 0 0		
License £10, assessment £25	35 0 0		
Shearing and washing	50 0 0		
Extra expenses, contingencies, &c.	100 0 0		
Rations, &c. for owner	80 0 0		
	515 0 0		
Total expenses	547 6 8		
Balance			
	1062 6 8		1062 6 8

In this calculation I have taken the fleece at 2½lbs., which is less than the average of what a fleece ought to be, which only fetches 11d. per pound. I suppose the sheep to be clean, that is, free of scab. I have put down the wages at the present prices, though I think there is every reason to expect a fall to £15, or even £12. The settler would shear about 11,000 sheep and lambs in the third year. If a man have a family, he might add another hundred a year for comforts, and for a man and a woman servant additional.

From the foregoing statement it would appear that less than £2,000 would suffice for the purchase and conducting of a station such as I have described; and perhaps it might, but it is by no means probable that sheep will long remain at their present low price; we must leave room also for some mismanagement and mistakes on the part of a new-comer. The expenses of living in Melbourne and other contingencies must be allowed for. It must also be remembered that the full

amount of the price of the wool is not received for nearly a year after shearing; while wages, stores, &c. are expenses out of pocket, and that a man is in a far better position who can go with his money in his hand to buy his stores than one who deals on credit. The present system, too, of taking a large advance on wool when shipped is one which had better be avoided. The use of the money for about nine or ten months costs, between exchange and commission, about $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on an average; and it would be far better, if the wool-grower could afford, to wait until the proceeds of his wool were remitted from England. Selling wool at Melbourne is very unsatisfactory. If sent home, it goes into a market where there is a fair competition, and it fetches pretty nearly its value, whether this be much or little; but in Melbourne, where there are but few buyers, a man is never sure of this.

I do not like at present to say much on the prospects of the cattle holder, because until salting, boiling down, or preserving meat in tin cases hermetically closed, or some of these modes of turning stock into cash is carried out on a good system, the profit likely to be derived from cattle cannot be calculated on with any degree of certainty. There is, however, so little expense and risk attendant on rearing them, and they can be purchased so cheap, (I have known some to be sold so low as 13s. a head,) that whichever of these modes or whatever combination of them be found most advantageous, I have no doubt that stock of this kind will yield a fair return. Making cheese and butter may, I think, turn out profitable; but it must be for export.

Van Dieman's Land will probably take a good deal of cheese at a remunerating price. The home market at Melbourne is so small, and so easily overstocked, that it would not be worth the while of any person who does things on a large scale to undertake to supply it, at least at present, a certain market being of greater consequence to a producer than an occasional high price.

In April, 1844, (subsequent to the author's departure from New South Wales,) a set of regulations regarding depasturing licences, were published by the government, which have excited a considerable ferment amongst the pastoral interest in that country. Under these regulations one license of ten pounds will not cover a station capable of containing more than 4000 sheep or 500 cattle, nor one extending over an area of more than twenty square miles, but in these, and one or two other cases, a second fee of ten pounds is required. It does not appear to me that there is any thing in these regulations to call for the strong censure which they have received, nor to account for the excitement caused by them in New South Wales. It seems but fair that a man who has 8000 sheep should pay more for his license to depasture them, than he who has but 4000, and that if he has to pay £20, while the latter pays but £10, he is only taxed to the same amount. Probably the fairest and most satisfactory mode of proceeding would have been to have done away altogether with the ten-pound fee for the license, and to have increased the poll-tax to three half-pence on each sheep, and so in proportion for cattle. Still there seems nothing so objectionable in

these regulations, as to account for the feeling which they have excited; and if the money raised by them be applied to the keeping up a moderate stream of immigration, they will be of benefit to the stockholders themselves. We must therefore look deeper for the causes of the present dissatisfaction, which is attributable to this; that these regulations have forced upon the attention of the stockholding squatters the fact, that they and their property are completely at the mercy of the government, and they fear that other changes still more unfavourable to them may be in contemplation. They know that they have sprung into their present importance without the aid, and they believe in despite of the discountenance of government, and they fear that their interests, and through them, the interests of the colony, may be sacrificed to some hankering after the exploded Wakefield system. I have no doubt that these fears are exaggerated. It is absurd to suppose that government can have any other object than the welfare of the colony, and it is almost equally impossible to imagine that they can long shut their eyes to the importance of the export of wool, whether it is looked upon as a colonial export, or as contributing nearly a third of the imported raw material of one of the most important branches of British manufacture. The interests, therefore, of the class of men by whom this article is raised, namely, the squatters, cannot be a matter of indifference, and it cannot be disguised that they are placed in a false position. Whether from too great a leaning to theoretical systems, and to the old-fashioned notion that it is more virtuous to grow a pound of flour

than a pound of wool; or from whatever cause an attempt was made, by a forced system of concentration, to make New South Wales an agricultural country, without its being considered that had this attempt succeeded she would have had no market for her surplus produce. When, however, the aptitude of the country for the growth of wool, an article of sufficient value to bear the cost of transit to a distant market, had induced the colonists to overstep the bounds assigned as the limits of location, and to trust themselves and their flocks to the wilderness, government had to recognize their possession and to sanction their occupation, without, however, recognizing any right of property. Hence arose the present unsatisfactory squatting tenure, under which the property of the land is dissevered from the possession. And, in my mind, the problem which the government have to solve is, how this unnatural state of things is to be got rid of without doing injustice to any interest, and how the large and respectable class of men, who compose the body known as the squatters, are to be given such an interest in the lands which they occupy, as may enable them to reside with comfort upon their stations, and to spread civilization through the country, while they personally superintend the management of their farms. That a modification of the act of parliament, fixing the minimum price of land at twenty shillings an acre, must be one of the first steps, is an opinion about which there exists a perfect unanimity amongst all classes in New South Wales; and it is to be hoped that the temperate expression of that opinion will have its due weight with the government and legislature of Great Britain.

CHAPTER IV.

MODE OF LIFE OF SQUATTERS—BUSH FIRES—BUSH TRAVELLING.

“ *Cor.*—And how like you this shepherd’s life, Master Touchstone?

“ *Touch.*—Truly shepherd in respect of itself it is a good life, but in respect that it is a shepherd’s life it is naught. In respect that it is private I like it very well, but in respect that it is solitary it is a very vile life. Now in respect that it is in the fields it pleaseth me well, but in respect that it is not at the court it is tedious.”

AS YOU LIKE IT.

WHEN Shakspeare penned the foregoing lines he little thought that he was writing what would with sufficient point characterize the advantages and inconveniences of a mode of life to be pursued, after a lapse of centuries, by thousands of his fellow countrymen at the antipodes, in regions undreamt of by the wildest speculator of his times. Yet such has been the revolution of events; such too are the unchanging qualities of man, that there never will be wanting those who are unreasonable enough to complain of the absence of advantages, from their very nature incompatible with the mode of life they have adopted; and this I take to be the moral of Touchstone’s satire. Thus he who paints in the school of nature produces portraits, the originals of which never die, and uses colours that will for ages continue fresh as when they flowed wet from the pallet of the artist. Thus, too, the descriptions in the earlier books of the Pentateuch almost startle one by the accuracy and fidelity with which they represent a state of life

somewhat similar to what we see in Australia. Abraham and Lot's shepherds quarrelling about the water; their dividing the country in which they were each to seek a run; Jacob taking Laban's sheep on terms,—translated thus into ordinary language are nothing more than the every-day occurrences of Australian life.

There are few persons in England who can have formed a notion of an Australian squatter's mode of existence at all, in accordance with the real state of facts. I have never met with a work on the country which even professes to supply this want; so that all the information which exists must have been derived from private sources. And when I consider how very vague and inaccurate all my own notions were on the subject, previous to leaving home, although I had endeavoured to gain as much information as I could, I almost despair of being able to convey any thing of accurate knowledge, while I am at the same time furnished with an additional motive to make the attempt. I recollect what gave me the most definite notion of an Australian habitation was a print published as a frontispiece to a sixpenny blue paper pamphlet, which represented a young gentleman in a short fur jacket, eyeing intently a hut in the distance, where a number of cocks and hens, of colossal size, were disporting round the door, or perching on the roof. I will try, however, what a faithful description of minute details will do in giving something of just notions on this subject.

The reader is prepared from what I have said of the country to find the dwelling of the squatter surrounded by picturesque scenery. Suppose, for instance, a valley

of about one or two miles wide, confined by banks, in some places steep, rocky, and wooded, in others sloping and grassy. A few large trees are scattered here and there over a rich alluvial flat. Either a chain of water-holes, or a river runs along the centre, whose course is marked in some places by reeds, in others by tall gum trees. You see at some distance an enclosure of eight or ten acres, fenced with post and triple rail, in this there is a promising-looking crop of oats and potatoes. There is also a garden, fenced something in the same manner. Near this are three or four huts, which seem to have been dropped in the places they occupy, without the least reference to each other. The principal one, however, stands somewhat apart from the rest, and is surrounded by a paling, which also encloses a small flower garden. This hut is a rude erection, the sides of which are made of upright slabs, about seven feet high, plastered at the interstices, and whitewashed; the roof is of bark; a rude verandah occupies the front, and there are two windows of about two feet square, one on each side of the door. The whole hut is about twenty-two feet long, and about twelve feet wide. The door opens into the sitting-room, which is about twelve feet square, and has a fine large fire-place. It is furnished with a couple of tables, a sofa covered with an opossum rug, and a few chairs. The walls are lined with a coarse canvass, and are hung with bookshelves, a few prints, some guns, daggers, shot-belts, whips, &c. The floor is of slabs, adzed smooth. This room is divided from the sleeping-room by a wall, or screen reaching as high as the wall-plate of the hut, with an

opening above it, the whole height of the pitch of the roof: behind it there is a kitchen. The other huts consist of men's hut, store hut, shed for carts, overseer's hut, &c.: at a greater distance there is a wool-shed, generally a large building.

I have thus, by giving a detailed account of one individual hut, endeavoured to obtain something fixed to start from in varying the description, so as to make it more general. Some huts are better and many worse, than what I have described: it is rather under than over the usual size—the mode mentioned of dividing sitting-room and bed-room by a screen is almost universal. I only allude to bachelor's huts; where married people reside in the bush, there is of course much more accommodation. Slabs are the most common material for building. These are a kind of plank, generally about two inches thick, and varying in width from eight inches to a foot: they are obtained by splitting with wedges the gum tree, the stringy bark and iron bark. The mode of building is this: Upright corner-posts, of about a foot in diameter, are fixed firmly in the ground, being sunk about two foot deep; a wall-plate is placed at top, from one to the other of these, and firmly secured, and a sleeper at bottom, so as to connect all together, and form a kind of frame. Both wall-plate and sleeper are grooved, and the slabs are fitted into the grooves, and run up close together. Some huts are roofed with the bark of the stringy bark, or with that of the box tree; many are thatched with a kind of wire grass, and a few are roofed with a kind of large shingle called broad paling.

The furnishing of these huts depends a good deal on the habits and taste of their occupiers, which of course vary very much, men of very different grades of society being comprehended in the class of squatters, which, in addition to those mentioned in a former chapter, contains several very excellent and respectable men sprung from the farmers and wealthy yeomanry of England, and besides these a nondescript class embracing considerable variety of character and respectability. This being the case, the interior of some of these simple dwellings resembles the inside of an English farm-house; some (such as that which I have described) have an ambiguous character, something between a rude sporting-lodge and the theatrical representation of a bandit's retreat; while others are chiefly characterized by want of cleanliness and comfort.

The mode of living adopted by the different settlers, varies for the same reason. Mutton is indeed the staple dish at all sheep stations, and beef at those of cattle. Damper, too, in some shape or other, is in general use instead of bread; but the mode of dressing and serving, the cleanliness or dirt with which this is done, all in fact which makes a meal comfortable or the contrary, vary with the habits of your entertainer. Besides this, the addition of butter, eggs, potatoes, and other vegetables, and occasionally fowls, bacon, or ham, makes a considerable variation in the monotony of eternal mutton. If to this be added two or three fine melons for a desert, you cannot complain very much of your fare; and the comfort is, that none of these things cost any thing but a little trouble. Damper is unlea-

vened bread baked in ashes, and when well made is good enough. Many attempts have been made to improve upon it, and in some instances with success. Very good bread is however made with barm at some stations, and at others with soda. At most stations in the bush, tea forms an accompaniment to every meal; and when the other parts of the repast are only mutton chops and damper, it is a great improvement, but it does not go well with vegetables. The tea in universal use is a cheap kind of green tea called Hyson-skin; it has a pleasant flavour, but is not remarkable for that quality alluded to in Rory O'More, of "taking a great hold of the second water." The shepherds and hut-keepers boil the tea and sugar together, and when a man is heated and thirsty, a pint pot of this, piping hot and without milk, is a most refreshing drink. At many stations, wine is now used at dinner. There is a Spanish wine grown, I believe, in Catalonia, which can be drunk for about 6d. a bottle, which makes very good wine and water. It is a strong, full-flavoured, rather rough, red wine. Teneriffe and Marsala (both cheap wines) are also in use.*

Living in this manner, and lodged in the way I have described, the squatter's life passes in an uniform cur-

* This description only applies to the squatters and not to the owners of purchased land, many of whom have very good houses and live much as people do in England. They are, however, chiefly confined to the neighbourhood of Melbourne and Geelong.

rent, varied only by the periodical returns of seasons of greater or less activity.

“ So many weeks his ewes have been with young,
So many days ere the poor fools will yeave,
So many months ere he shall shear the fleece.”

His sheep are either lambing or about to lamb, or are to be sheared, or dressed if scabby—the settler, indeed, who is unfortunate enough to have scabby sheep should never rest. Then there is the carting down of wool, and the bringing up of stores, the parting with and engaging of servants; then either a waterhole is to be cleaned, or a hut to be repaired, or a new one built; and then there is the new paddock, which is always to be begun when there is nothing else to do; all of which, with the general surveillance required in an extensive and necessarily scattered establishment, leave him no room to complain of want of employment. Most men have, besides, some acres of cultivation, and many have gardens, which are another source of employment and recreation. Books, however, form the great source of entertainment for many solitary hours of the settler; and it will perhaps astonish many to hear that a book club has been established in the neighbourhood of the Grange and Wannon, 200 miles west of Melbourne, where there are several married settlers, who thus obtain from England all the recent periodicals and interesting publications. I should not omit the never-failing black pipe, which to a great number of the settlers is that to which they look for enjoyment. Still, with all these

employments and these resources, there is many an hour which hangs heavily on the solitary occupant of the squatter's hut. In respect that it is solitary, it is a very vile life. However, most of the stations are jointly occupied by two partners who form society for each other, and there are many now on which married men are residing with their wives and families, who seem to live very happily.

The persons whom I have observed to make the best settlers, are either those men of good education and gentlemanlike habits and feelings, who from the cultivation of their minds, possess sources of entertainment and interest unknown to those who are without such advantages; and who, from a true appreciation of what raises or lowers character, are not, when occasion requires it, above putting their hands to any work however rough. But I must do bushmen in general the justice to say, that on this score there is very little squeamishness amongst them. They are from first to last a hardy, enterprising, hard-working set of men. Or else, those men who, brought up from infancy in rural pursuits as farmers, find little change from what they have been accustomed to from childhood, save that which is caused by difference of country and climate.

There is one incident, and that by no means an uncommon one, which puts to the proof all a bushman's energy. This is the occurrence of bush fires. All parts of the country, but particularly those which are naturally rich, and where the grass is not sufficiently eaten down by stock, are exceedingly apt to catch fire in the summer-time, when the grass has become withered

and dry. Some persons are of opinion that the ignition is spontaneous ; but there are quite enough of known causes to account for their occurrence, without resorting to this obscure explanation of their origin founded on a fact which is by no means established. Travellers or shepherds lighting fires (a very frequent circumstance,) the natives carrying about fire-sticks from place to place, their leaving their numerous fires burning when they abandon their encampment, as also settlers setting fire to part of their runs in order to burn off the old grass, are amongst these. The fire when first kindled may burn but slowly for a time, but when a high wind rises it rages with great fury and spreads with terrific rapidity ; and if no precautions have been taken against it, or if some natural circumstances do not occur to favour the efforts of the settler to extinguish it, it burns down every thing before it. There have been some instances, though they are rare, of men losing their huts, stores, wool, woolshed, and even flocks of sheep by this means. The most usual precaution taken to prevent this is, to burn a line round the homestead or whatever place you wish to preserve. This operation is not always unattended with risk : one of the most troublesome fires which I remember, was caused by one of our men attempting injudiciously to burn a line between us and a neighbour, during the prevalence of a hot wind ; for although he was assisted by three others, the fire overcame all their efforts to extinguish it, and it was not until every man at the station turned out that it was finally got under after three days' fighting with it. This fighting with fire is the most trying work in which a

man can well be engaged, as it is most commonly during hot winds that the worst fires occur ; the combined heat of the air and fire, together with the suffocating fumes of the smoke, form an atmosphere in which even the slightest exertion would be distressing, and as a man has to exert all his physical power for hours together under these unfavourable circumstances, and generally without being able to get a mouthful of water, some idea may be formed of the distressing nature of the service. I have seen one of the most powerfully-framed and strongest constituted men I ever knew, so completely overcome as to throw himself down on his face close to the fire, and lie there perfectly careless whether he was burned or not.

When a fire is to be put out, all the available force of the station is mustered, and the most desirable mode of proceeding having been decided on, (reference being had to the wind and other circumstances,) they spread themselves along the line of fire, each man armed with the branch of a tree ; they then go on steadily, one after another, putting it out as they proceed, one man being left at a considerable distance behind to prevent its breaking out again—a circumstance very likely to occur in spite of every precaution. In this manner they proceed until the whole is extinguished, pausing where the grass and bushes are very thick, and making more vigorous efforts where circumstances are more favourable or where a shift of wind gives them an advantage. The most provoking circumstance is, that frequently the hot ashes from the burning trees are blown to a distance and ignite a fresh fire as

bad as the first ; and as these trees burn for days together, it is nearly impossible to guard against this.

When the fire is burning through a forest, the effect is exceedingly grand. The green shrubs and young trees become enveloped in dense masses of mixed smoke and flame, while the fire sings and crackles merrily, as if rejoicing in the work of destruction. On one side, far as the eye can reach, the blackened earth and smouldering stumps bear witness to its ravages ; while, on the other, the green forest waves in all the freshness of luxuriant vegetation ; between the living and the dead creeps the long line of fire, like some insidious pestilence spreading its ravages amongst the vigorous and beautiful ; over all hangs the lurid atmosphere surcharged with smoke and vapour, through which struggle the rays of a nearly vertical sun, but shining sickly and unnatural. The continued rushing sound of the fire, and the sighing of the hot wind, sounds monotonously on the ear, or interrupted only by an occasional crash, as from time to time some mighty tree succumbs to its fate, and the forest trembles at the fall of its verdant patriarchs.

It is a moot point amongst the settlers whether burning the country is of service or not, and I believe the result of experience is, that where land is fully stocked a better sod will be formed by having the grass eaten down than by burning it, but that where the grass becomes long and rank, it is of no use until burnt down as no animal will eat it, and practically it is only in such places that it is resorted to as a means of improving the herbage. Lord John Russell, when secretary for the

colonies, suggested, on the advice of Count Strelisky, that burning the grass should be put a stop to by legal enactment. Several strong arguments were used against this, but perhaps one was held to be sufficient, namely, that it was impossible to do so. The forests recover from the effects of these fires much sooner than could be expected, and all thick underwood is effectually cleared away by them.

When a settler leaves home, he generally travels on horseback. About forty miles is considered a moderate day's journey; and on a pinch, I have known men to ride the same horse seventy miles in a day; this is, however, far too much for a horse who has to go several days' journey. Horses are very cheap, and at almost every station there are a few brood mares, and thus the settlers have a command of excellent horses at little or no expense, save that of the original outlay for the mares. There are always roads or tracks leading from each station towards Melbourne, Geelong, Portland, or Port Fairy, as the case may be, so that a stranger can generally make his way without a great deal of difficulty, as long as he keeps to the main tracks; but when it comes to travelling from one station to another across the country, it becomes more puzzling. Some people never succeed in becoming good bushmen; and there have been instances of persons being *bushed* (that is, having to spend the night *al fresco*), within a mile of their own doors. No man should travel without a pocket compass; for in the wooded parts of the country, the forest, though generally open enough for most purposes, is so close, as to prevent your having a view of

more than a hundred yards in any direction; and the appearance of the ground and trees being in most places similar, there is nothing to direct you but the wind, the sun, and your compass. The last is the best to trust to, as in summer the sun is so near the zenith that it is not easy to steer by it in the middle of the day; and the wind is not to be depended on for anything of correct steering, and is always liable to change. If you know the course you are to steer, and use your compass properly, you go on very well at first, that is, if you escape being (what sailors call) brought up by some impassable marsh or gulley, not laid down in your instructions. And here I should advise all new comers, before venturing upon a journey through the bush, to ascertain the meaning of the words, a tier, a range, a creek, a gulley, a track, a river, and a road. He may probably imagine that he knows the meaning of the last three; but he may nevertheless find himself mistaken. It sounds rather Irish to say, that when you have arrived at a place, you are in the greatest danger of losing your way; but such is very nearly the case. When you think that you ought to be at the place of your destination, you find yourself suddenly, perhaps, on the edge of an impassable gulley or river, and there is nothing to inform you whether you ought to go to the right or left; and as it is impossible in a ride of ten or twelve miles through a forest, to be sure of steering by compass within less than half a mile of your point, you cannot tell whether you are too much to the north, or to the south, or to the east, or the west. You have then to look out for sheep tracks, or horse

tracks, or dray tracks; and if the night be closing in, this becomes a very interesting search. If not successful in obtaining any clue, you must take chance for it, and go either up or down as your fancy leads. If you find a station, you are all right; if not, you may for a last chance cooey,* or fire a pistol, and then listen with your ear to the ground for the barking of dogs. If this be in vain, you then tether your horse, look out for a cherry tree, which is the most approved tree to sleep under, as it affords the most shelter, and makes the best mi-mi, or breakweather. If you have the means of lighting a fire, you may consider yourself fortunate. This is the regular process of being bushed, and in fine weather it is no great hardship, if you are not very hungry.

A summer night in greenwood spent
Were but to-morrow's merriment.

But in the long, and frequently wet, winter nights, it must be anything but a joke.

The chief charm of a settler's life is its independence. There is something too in the reflection, that by his gains no one is injured; his fee is not subtracted from the pittance of indigence, nor his gains derived from the crimes or misfortunes of mankind. By how much his wealth increases, by so much is an addition made to the stores of mankind. By his efforts too, the

* The cooey is a call in universal use amongst the settlers, and has been borrowed from the natives. The performer dwells for about half a minute upon one note, and then raises his voice to the octave. It can be heard at a great distance.

boundaries of civilization have been enlarged. And if that man be pronounced a benefactor to his species who makes one blade of grass to grow where none grew before, surely he is entitled to at least equal praise, who becomes the pioneer for his fellow-man to regions of almost boundless fertility. These are reflections which do not occur every hour, nor every day, nor to every mind; but they do exercise a more practical influence on the happiness of some men than many people are aware; and there is nothing which so powerfully chills the energies, or throws a damp over exertion, as the being unable to give a satisfactory answer to the question *cui bono*.

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE—VALUE OF THE COLONIAL MARKET FOR GRAIN—GELONG—
 PROSPECTS OF EMIGRANTS—CLASSES LIKELY TO SUCCEED, AND THE CON-
 TRARY—COLONIAL SOCIETY—LABOURING CLASSES—OLD HANDS AND EMI-
 GRANTS—STATE OF CRIME—TABLES.

THE natural wish of every man is to establish himself in some place which he can call his own, where he can feel that in gathering round him civilization and comfort he is not throwing his money away, but is improving a property which he may leave to his children after him; and it certainly is much to be regretted that he must sacrifice this feeling if he wish to engage in sheepfarming, which is the most profitable business in the colony. For I conceive that it is a piece of very doubtful wisdom for a man who is not thoroughly acquainted with the thing himself, to leave his station in the hands of an overseer. There is no place where good or bad management tells more decidedly than on an Australian sheep station; and we know from authority that "the eye of the master maketh the beast fat." A man who thoroughly understands sheep, and who lives within a moderate distance of his station, may indeed keep it under proper control, as he can visit it constantly, and see in a very short time whether things are going right or wrong; but even this is not as satisfactory as living on the spot; it also takes a man constantly from home, and the surveillance is a laborious

duty instead of being just sufficient to give him a little interesting employment each day, while he is enjoying all the pleasures and comforts of home. These objections do not apply with the same force to a distant cattle station.

If a man be discouraged by the foregoing considerations from embarking in sheep farming, he may turn his attention to agriculture; for engaging in which there at present exist great facilities. Many sections of land, with cottages and out-buildings, and with gardens stocked with vines, fig-trees, peaches, &c. may be at present purchased within ten or twelve miles of Melbourne, on very low terms, probably not more than half what was expended in making those improvements in the dear times; and land still better for the purposes of cultivation, within twenty miles of Geelong, and on the banks of the Barwan river, may be purchased in its unimproved state, from private individuals, for about twelve shillings per acre. In this part of the country there is already a considerable quantity of cultivation, and the crops seem certain; about twenty-five bushels of wheat per acre is, I am told, an average crop, and as much as forty bushels is sometimes yielded. It seems to be the opinion of persons, the best informed, that, when wages come down to twelve pounds per annum, it will pay very well to grow wheat, barley, and potatoes for the Sydney and Melbourne markets—some idea of the value of which may be formed from the following tables :

In addition to this are the other articles specified in the tables, the total amount of which, together with the wheat and flour, is valued at £1,088,343, giving an annual average of £155,477; but striking off about one-third for the high prices of those years, and as an allowance for the rice and maize, which must still continue to be imported from foreign parts, there is an annual consumption to the value of about £100,000 a year for the agriculturist to supply.

But whether agriculture yield a large per centage on the capital embarked or not, there is one thing of which a man may be certain, which is, of having every comfort and many luxuries on the cheapest terms. In every part of New South Wales living costs a mere trifle. I have before given the prices of the mere necessaries of life—flour, sugar, tea, and meat, in January, 1844: flour, at £10 per ton, or ten pounds for a shilling; brown sugar, £16 a ton, or seven pounds for a shilling; white sugar, 4½d. a pound; tea, £5 5s. per chest, or 1s. 7½d. per pound; mutton and beef, 1½d. per pound;—of course when purchased by retail these things cost something more. In Melbourne house-rent is very low; excellent brick cottages, with five or six rooms, can be had for from forty to fifty pounds per annum. So that a man may remain for six months or more if he chooses in the town, and may judge for himself the course most proper for him to pursue, without being driven, as people formerly were, to decide in a hurry, from the feeling that every day they deferred doing so, they were at an enormous expense. And, although every person who emigrates is naturally anxious to

settle himself at once, it is a much wiser plan to wait for some time.

Geelong, which I have mentioned above, is situated on a bay called Corio Bay, which is part of the Port Phillip inlet. It is distant from Melbourne between thirty and forty miles, in a south-west direction. The town is divided into two parts, or, more properly speaking, there are two villages—South Geelong, or Geelong proper, and North Geelong, or Corio (as it is generally called). They are about a mile apart. The former, which is a straggling hamlet, is finely situated on a grassy slope, on the banks of the river Barwan, here a broad and deep river, having been joined by the river Marrabul somewhat higher up. Corio (which is a larger and more thriving place) is placed on the edge of the bay, upon a rising ground, which overlooks the sea, and its situation is very beautiful. Upon a guess, I should say that it contained about one hundred houses; and as all the settlers to the south-west ship their wool there, and draw their stores from thence, it is a stirring little place in the wool season. There is good anchorage in Corio Bay, but ships of a large class cannot come in close, on account of a bar—they lie at a place about five miles off. There is constant steam communication between this and Melbourne; the passage occupies from five to seven hours; the distance round by the road is fifty miles.

From the detailed account which I have given of the articles of export, and from what I have said of sheep, cattle, and agricultural farming an idea may be formed of what are the means of profitable employment open

to the emigrant. No doubt as the colony advances new modes of industry will arise, and new sources of wealth be discovered. Amongst those may be ranked the growing of wine, about which many people are very sanguine. At Sydney it succeeds very well; and the vine thrives very much at Port Phillip; still it is too soon to pronounce an opinion, but raisins could, I should think, be made with profit.

Although, in speaking on this subject, I have endeavoured to do so with caution upon whatever seems problematical—and, where this is the case, rather to show the grounds for forming an opinion, than to announce one as already formed—yet I have no hesitation in stating what lines of life appear to me to afford but little prospect of success. Shop-keeping is one. Shop-keeping in general is overdone. There are far too many shops in Melbourne for the population of the district. Grocers and slopsellers seem to do the most business: the latter branch, as in many other places, being nearly altogether in the hands of the Jews. Ironmongery is an extensive business, but much overstocked—there are, I think, no less than six large shops of this kind in one street alone. The auctioneers, of whom there is a great number, take a great deal of custom out of the hands of the regular trader, and I wonder how so many manage to live. Artisans and artificers, particularly those whose trades minister to luxury, obtain but little employment; and many of them find it more to their advantage to seek it in the bush, as farm-servants, if they are not encumbered with a wife and family. Coopers seem to get a good deal of business; and pro-

bably glue-makers, tanners, soap-boilers, and tallow-chandlers will be in demand before long. A large number of shoemakers find employment, but the trade is overstocked. But the most helpless class consists of young men without capital, who have received a tolerable education, and who would perhaps be qualified to act as clerks in merchants' houses: there is but little chance of their getting an appointment of this kind, and their only resource is to become shepherds or stockmen, and perhaps qualify themselves in time to act as overseers.

There are two classes of persons who are almost sure to benefit themselves, and others, by coming to the country. One consists of small capitalists, and the other of agricultural labourers. A sheep station, as I said before, should not be undertaken unless the proprietors start with a command of two thousand pounds. A small number of sheep does not pay; and there is this further drawback, that the run must be necessarily small, and consequently, when the sheep increase to any thing of a paying number, it is necessary to move to another—a step attended by great expense, risk of loss, and almost certainty of infection. Persons with much less capital might embark in agriculture, dairy farming, or some other branch of industry: the grand principle being to keep out of debt, and above all things never to get a bill discounted. If a man acts on this system, he can scarcely be much straitened, for every thing is so very cheap, that he can go on living at a very trifling expense, until he derives some return from his capital. The second class consists of agricultural labourers, farm-

herds and hut-keepers, which require little bodily strength, and in which men of all kinds soon become proficient, if they are honest enough to do their duty by their employers. The wages of this class of men are at present twenty pounds per annum, with the rations I have before mentioned ; but I anticipate a fall to fifteen pounds, or even to twelve pounds, rations continuing of course the same. Under the present system of tenure, married people not being much in request from the difficulty of accommodating them, and from their being little work for women in the bush, a married couple cannot expect at most more than five pounds above these rates of wages, and if they have young children not any thing more.

Amongst the most interesting topics connected with a country which a man is about to adopt as his home, may be ranked the inquiry into the state of society, and the class of men with whom he is likely to be thrown, and with whom he must to a certain extent identify himself ; and I think I may safely say, that there exist in the district of Port Phillip the materials of a very good society. Bachelors, however, predominate over married men ; and such ladies as live in the bush are necessarily less locomotive than their husbands, so that they are but seldom seen in Melbourne, whither the latter are occasionally brought by the calls of business, and this circumstance also adds to the preponderance of male over female society. The loss, too, is much felt of some one to take a lead in society, of something in the shape of a government house, something in short to servants, or men willing to undertake the duties of shep-

bring people together.* Subscription balls have been held every quarter, until within the last year, when the gloomy aspect of money matters rendered people indisposed for amusements of this kind, and indeed until a decided reaction takes place, it is neither to be expected nor wished that there should be much indulgence in gaiety. But while circumstances permitted their being kept up, they were of more importance in a social point of view than people at home may imagine, as enabling persons, scattered in different parts of the country, to become known to each other, who might have but few other opportunities of being acquainted. In this point of view, as far as gentlemen are concerned, the club is of great service. It is composed of the principal merchants, many magistrates, government officers, and a number of squatters. To the latter it is very useful, as it enables them, when they come in from their stations, to go to a quiet, respectable place, where they see all the recent European newspapers and periodicals, meet other settlers from distant parts of the country, and become at once acquainted with all that is going on whether at home or abroad.

There is one feature in colonial society (at least in that of a new colony like Port Phillip,) which gives it a life and spirit which you do not find at home, except in

* It is not to be expected that his honour the superintendent can occupy this position. His income, until this year, was only £700, and there is no house attached to the office. By the act, 5 and 6 Vic. c. 76, his income was raised to £1,500, but there has been a bill introduced into the legislative council to reduce it.

the capitals of Europe. This arises from the variety of the materials of which it is composed, and from the different views, the different knowledge, and experience of men differently educated, whose lives have been passed in different scenes, in different professions, and in different parts of the globe. If you want to hear the particulars of some Chinese custom, probably your next neighbour can inform you; a second illustrates an argument on draught, by a description of the mode of harnessing dogs in Greenland; a third has personally inspected the isthmus of Panama, and can give you an opinion as to the practicability and expense of cutting it through; while from a fourth you may learn all the details of the Niger expedition. You see a pale and delicate, but resolute-looking man—he was the first who made the dangerous experiment of taking cattle overland to Adelaide; he opposite you, with a quiet expression and mild blue eye, is one of the most determined and adventurous explorers and the best bushman in the country; that other florid and rather effeminate-looking youth has gone through dangers and surmounted difficulties which would appal many a stout heart; and so on of the rest, for there are few who have not had occasions to try them when they had nothing else to depend on, for the preservation of their lives, but their own courage and perseverance.

The labouring population may be divided into two classes, the old hands and emigrants. The old hands are men who, having been formerly convicts, (or *lags* as they are generally termed,) have become free by the expiration of their sentences. Some of these men came

over in charge of the stock originally brought from Van Dieman's Land and Sydney at the first settlement of the colony, and many have since followed them. As a body, they are a daring, energetic, hard-working class of men, with a considerable fear of infringing the law, or at least of the consequences of being made amenable to it, but at the same time requiring a strict hand to keep them in order, as it is part of their system to impose (or as they term it *to try it on*) whenever they have a chance of success, which of course is most likely with new settlers. If the first encroachment succeeds, they try another, thus *trying it on* until, if unchecked, they establish a system very much calculated for their own comfort and convenience, but by no means conducive to their masters' interests. They are generally well acquainted with splitting, building, fencing, and bush-work of all kinds; and from their experience in wood-craft, and their knowledge of the resources and expedients of which a man may avail himself, or to which he may have recourse in the bush, were of the greatest service, if not actually indispensable, to the first settlers in occupying a new country. With respect to sheep management, there is a great difference between the Sydney and Van Dieman's Land old hands. In Van Dieman's Land, the sheep are all reared in enclosed paddocks or fields as in England, and the sheep farmers there never attempt the thorough eradication of scab, contenting themselves with merely keeping it down, as it is called, and from the circumstance of the sheep not being enclosed in hurdles at night or fed in flocks during the day, it does not spread with the same rapidity or

become so formidable a disease as when the contrary is the case. Hence the experience with regard to sheep, both of settlers and labourers from thence, was of little avail in a country so differently circumstanced as Port Phillip. In Sydney, on the contrary, the system, with regard to both these points, was the same as at Port Phillip; and it is from the settlers and old hands of the Sydney district that we have learned most of what we know with respect to the improved management of sheep and the eradication of scab. On the whole, the old hands have been of essential service to the country, and when kept in order by persons who understand what is their duty, and who make them perform it, they are useful servants. They are, however, a disagreeable set of men to deal with; rarely, if ever, identifying their master's interests with their own, but looking upon him as a person to be overreached and imposed on, and despising him when he permits them to do so. The person who excites their greatest respect is the man who is alive to their attempts, (or, as they express it themselves, *who drops down to their moves*,) and the highest encomium they can pass on such an one is, that *there are no flies about him*. They are very fond of change, wandering about the country generally in pairs, and rarely remaining more than a year in one service. They are to be found more at the distant stations and in newly-settled country where wages are higher, and there is more difficulty to contend with, than in the more civilized parts where the emigrants have in a great measure superseded them. Still, through the whole country the great mass of shearers, splitters, and even bullock-

drivers are old hands. They have a strong *esprit de corps*, which is kept up by their speaking a language so full of cant expressions as to become almost a separate dialect. Their best trait is their liberality towards each other; and indeed when money was more easily made than at present, this was carried to a pitch of reckless profusion. When a man was paid his wages, or had made a good sum of money by shearing, splitting, or other job-work, he used to go to Melbourne and treat all his friends, and frequently keep open house at a public-house for a week or a fortnight together. In this way, I have known some of them to have spent upwards of a hundred pounds in that short time; they were, of course, extensively plundered by the publicans. Now, however, that money is not so easily earned, they are something less lavish, but still a large proportion spend all their earnings of several months', or even a year's hard labour in a few weeks' dissipation; and it is a common thing to deposit a sum with the landlord upon the understanding that he is to furnish drink while it lasts. When the money is out, they start away in search of new scenes and fresh employment, carrying on their backs their heavy packs, containing cloths and blankets or kangaroo rug. Two generally travel together, who are called mates; they are partners, and divide all their earnings.

Though amongst this class of men the standard of morality is very low, yet are they not without their rude notions of honour, modified, however, by a kind of public opinion amongst themselves, which exercises a considerable influence over their actions. They have

a pride in fulfilling their engagements; and when they undertake a piece of job-work, they generally adhere faithfully to their contract, although it may turn out an unprofitable job. I have known several instances in which money has been lent to them to the amount of two or three pounds, and I have never known it not to be repaid; and in general, when a confidence is reposed in them for the performance of any particular service, they acquit themselves creditably, though, as this arises from that pride which urges a man to show himself worthy of being trusted, and as it is a feeling which, however creditable in itself, is inferior to that principle which prompts a man to do his duty irrespectively of all other considerations, it might not, perhaps, be safe to count on a prolonged exertion of this kind. A man guilty of crimes of a mean and unmanly nature is despised by them; and one who robs from his fellows, but especially from his mate, is regarded as infamous. On the other hand, drunkenness and debauchery of any kind are not regarded as crimes—indeed to omit an opportunity of getting drunk would be considered as a kind of breach of privilege; nor are they very scrupulous on the subject of honesty, if the person injured be not a poor man. Defrauding one not of their own class they seem to regard as a spoiling of the Egyptians. I have always considered the observation of the effects produced on these men by their peculiar position as a most interesting study; and although this effect may be modified by peculiarity of disposition, yet I think that I have correctly delineated the leading characteristics of the class.

This sketch would be imperfect, did I finish it without mentioning the bullock-drivers, who are generally old hands, and are a wonderfully persevering and enterprising set of men. Driving bullocks in a hot wind, when there is much dust, and the road stony and difficult, can only be equalled by the same operation in cold, wet weather, when the ground is deep and swampy, when the wheel is constantly up to the nave in the mud, and the water frequently over the bed of the dray. These men generally curse and swear most awfully, to swear like a trooper being but a feeble image to any one who has heard an Australian bullock-driver.* I recollect once seeing a fellow stand on the edge of a small, but deep swamp, not very far from Portland Bay, and fairly curse his team through it. Whenever there was the least check, out would come a fresh volley, which seemed to produce a wonderful effect. Bad as this was, I overtook another on the same day who appeared to me even worse. The weather was very bad, and the road very much cut up. This latter driver seemed to have been drilled into not swearing; but he used to say "Bless your pretty hearts" in such a bitter ironical tone, and then from his heavy whip would come such a cut, in which seemed concentrated the whole venom of his composition, that this mode of combining the "suaviter in modo" with the "fortiter in ré," seemed to me more disgusting than the undisguised ruffianism of the other. Certainly driving bullocks

* This is a general sketch, and of course there are exceptions. One of the best men I ever knew in his station of life was a bullock-driver. He was, however, a free emigrant.

does try the temper severely, and if a few strong observations do at times escape, there is great provocation. Many of them think also that the bullocks won't go without it. It is wonderful to see the places these animals go up and down with loaded drays, and the deep quagmires they will go through. As an instance of the expedients of an Australian bullock-driver, I will just mention that the common mode of dragging a very steep hill, where the ordinary contrivance for this purpose would be quite inadequate, is to cut a tree down at the top of the hill, and to tie it with a chain to the back of the dray, where it acts as a most efficient drag. This has always struck me as the sublime of bullock-driving. To give an idea of the difficulties to which these men are exposed in some parts of the country, I may state that, in one journey in November, 1842, I passed, within seventy miles of Portland Bay, seven bullocks that had been drowned in attempting to bring drays across the river Grange, one dray that had been plundered by the natives, and then shoved into a water-hole, and two others stuck in different swamps, with their axletrees broken. This was, however, a particularly wet spring, and in many places, for half a mile and more, the road lay through swamps, where the water reached up nearly to my saddle-skirts.

The emigrants, or new hands, contrast in some respects very favourably with the class which I have sketched. They are more easily managed, have fewer tricks, are less fond of change, often remaining for a long time in the same situation, seeming to become attached to their employers, and to take an interest in

the property committed to their charge. They are less reckless about money, several of them having made considerable savings out of their wages. When they were new in the country, the old hands, vain of their own knowledge, looked down on their inexperience, while the emigrants in turn despised them for being convicts: so that it seldom answered to have them on the same station; but now the two classes amalgamate better, for the emigrants have had time to gain experience, and are able to hold their ground—indeed some of them are in every respect as useful, even in those departments, which were at first exclusively in possession of the old hands.

The following tables show something of the state of crime. They contain returns of all white persons tried in the supreme court since its establishment in 1841:—

	Murder.	Breach of the Peace.	Bodily Injury.	Forgery.	Bigamy.	Larceny.	Receiving, &c.	Uttering, &c.	Assault.	Kidnapping.	Obtaining money under false pretences.	Conspiracy.	Mortgage fraud.	Perjury.	Fraudulent trading.	Fraudulent conveyance.	Perjury.	Condition.		Total number tried.	Guilty.	Not guilty.
																		Fine.	Bond.			
1841.	10	3	63	8	2	2	1	7	5	2	4	3	1	4	2	1	1	91	11	102	53	47
1842.	3	2	74	7	1	10	2	7	1	1	3	3	1	4	2	1	1	122	2	124	56	68
1843.	5	1	35	12	1	5	2	4	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	69	4	73	51	22
Totals.	18	4	172	27	2	15	6	18	13	6	9	4	3	1	7	2	1	283	17	300	162	138

- 3 suffered the extreme penalty of the law.
- 42 transported for seven years.
- 4 transported for ten years.
- 3 transported for fourteen years.
- 18 transported for fifteen years.
- 21 transported for life.
- 71 Imprisoned for various periods.

Many people who left home formerly were apt to imagine that it was a matter of little consequence to them what might be the character of the population, or how society might be constituted in the country to which they were about to emigrate—that they were to go there for a certain time to make a fortune, and then return to England to spend it. Nothing could well be more injurious to the colony than this idea, and the depression of the times has at least done this service, that it has totally eradicated this notion, so true is it that

“ There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distill it out.”

No man should emigrate to a country which he does not intend to make his home ; and before taking the most important step which he can possibly take in not only choosing a home for himself, but a country for his children, he should calmly and dispassionately consider with himself what it is he gives up, and what he is likely to gain by the change, and not fall into the mistake of imagining that because he is discontented in England, he must be content when out of it. If upon such a consideration he should find that the advantages are likely far to preponderate, he should form an unwavering resolution, from which he should allow nothing to divert him. There are sacrifices which he must make in leaving home, and there are things which no new country can supply, were it Paradise itself. He must sacrifice the friendships of his youth and the associations of his childhood, much of the pleasure of society, and the intercourse olished

life. The past is, and must be sacrificed, and with it some of the most tender affections that adorn our nature, and tie us to our species; but in its place is afforded an easy independence at present, an unclouded prospect for his latter years, and, if he has faith in the destiny of mankind, a glorious future for his descendants. May I be excused for saying one word to those ladies whose husbands speak of emigrating. In leaving home a woman, no doubt, sacrifices more than a man. His feelings are of a sterner character, and he is by his constitution of a more selfish disposition. Consequently it is she who feels most poignantly the severance of natural ties; besides this, when settled in a new country, a man's more active occupations necessarily fill his time, and his plans engage his mind. She has, no doubt, her domestic duties and her household cares; but they are of an uniform and unexciting character, and there is little to substitute for the amusement and excitement of English life—no opera—no exhibitions—no popular preacher—no morning calls—nothing worthy of the name of shopping—rather *seedy* balls, and very few dinner parties. If it be thought too much to give up all this, in addition to the other sacrifices which must be made, let the battle be fought at once, and let her do her best to prevent her husband's leaving home; but when once this irrevocable step has been taken, let her make up her mind to these privations, which are necessarily attendant on their new mode of life, and let there be no complaints—"That although in respect that it is in the fields it pleaseth her well, yet in respect that it is not at the court it is tedious." One couple of

cheerful, contented persons, of cultivated minds, but unsophisticated feelings, are worth whole shiploads of discontented people, who underrate every thing colonial because it is not English, and in whose minds the recollections of the exciting dissipations of a highly artificial state of society destroy all relish for those simple duties which a more natural one imposes, and for those purer enjoyments which nature so bountifully spreads out for such as are capable of appreciating them.

How many men possessed of capital sufficient to give them the means of profitable employment in the colonies, spend a wretched life in some English country town, or watering place, in that most miserable of hypocrisies—the attempt to keep up appearances, struggling perhaps to bring up an interesting family to all the wretchedness of genteel beggary. How many young men, too, with the same means waste the best years of their life, and fritter away their energies in frivolous pursuits, for want of some way of employing them with a fair prospect of remuneration. The life of such men is scarcely worthy of being called living, but rather a prolonged contrivance for the killing of time—“*Verum enimvero is demum mihi vivere, atque animâ frui videtur, qui aliquo negotio, intentus, præclari facinoris, aut artis bonæ famam quærit.*” The colonies do not indeed afford a field for the performance of illustrious deeds; but they do open a path for useful and honourable employment; and it is well worth the while of such men as I have alluded to, seriously to take into consideration the prudence of at once taking a bold step, and their means of doing so.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL—EXCLUSION OF THE PASTORAL INTEREST FROM THE EXERCISE OF THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE—THEIR IMPORTANCE—IMPOSSIBILITY OF PORT PHILLIP BEING ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED AT SYDNEY—UNIVERSAL DESIRE FOR SEPARATION FROM SYDNEY—STATEMENT OF THE REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE OF PORT PHILLIP—FIRST SESSION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL—ITS LEGISLATION AND GENERAL BEHAVIOUR—DISTRICT COUNCILS—CORPORATION OF MELBOURNE.

By the act of parliament, 5 and 6 Victoria, cap. 76, a new constitution was given to the colony of New South Wales. By this act, the legislative power is vested in one chamber, called the Legislative Council, controlled, however, by the veto of the governor in the first instance, and by that of the queen in the second. Any bill which passes the council and receives the governor's assent, becomes law until disallowed by the queen, and notice of such disallowance being published in the colony; and any bill which passes the council, but from which the governor withholds his assent, does not become law unless the queen subsequently allows it, and until notice of such allowance as before.

The governor is assisted by an executive council, consisting, I believe, of the chief justice, the bishop, the commander of the forces, the colonial secretary, the colonial treasurer, and the attorney-general.

The Legislative Council consists of thirty-six members, twelve of whom are either *ex officio* members, as holding certain offices under the crown, or are nomi-

nated by the governor. The remaining twenty-four are elected by the people; of these, one is returned for the town of Melbourne, and five for the district of Port Phillip generally. The council, if not previously dissolved, lasts for six years. The qualification for members of council is £2,000 of freehold estate in land, or £100 a year issuing out of it. That of electors is £200 of freehold estate in land, or the occupation of a house worth £20 a year.

The infusion of the principle of popular election into the constitution of the Legislative Council has been a boon conferred by the present government in a spirit of enlightened legislation, and, although the qualification both of members and electors is unsuited to the circumstances of the country, it has been received by the colonists generally in a spirit of becoming thankfulness; and I have no doubt that the beneficial results of this measure will amply repay those who have had the merit of framing it. It is, however, much to be regretted, that this boon could not have been granted without affording a further proof either of the ignorance of government with regard to the true state of the colony, or of its utter disregard of the pastoral interest which is its mainstay. It was scarcely to have been expected, that in framing a constitution for a new legislative assembly, this interest should have been overlooked, and the property, whose annual returns are exhibited in the exports of the country, left entirely unrepresented. Yet such is the case. If, for instance, one examines the table of exports from Port Phillip, given in a former chapter, it will be found, that out of £232,000, to

which they amount, four and a-half tons of oil valued at £104, are the only portion not raised by the unre-presented part of the community. In legislating for new conditions of society, men should resort to principles, and not be guided entirely by precedent. *Qui hæret in literâ, hæret in cortice.* The freehold was adopted by our ancestors as the test of qualification, not because there was any greater virtue in a lease for life, than for a term of ninety-nine years, but because, as the name implies, it was the peculiar tenure of the freeman, and the test of his being such, which in those primitive times was considered a sufficient qualification for the exercise of the elective franchise. In modern times, the same object of limiting the elective franchise to those whose position in life gives a certain degree of assurance that they would properly exercise this important privilege, has been carried out in the British isles by enlarging the qualification, but still resting it, for the most part, on the basis of landed property, or the occupation of a house of a certain value, which there forms a very fair test. In the case, however, of the three universities, as also in that of freemen of cities, this principle is departed from; and in these, the qualification to exercise this right is ascertained by a test totally irrespective of property.

If, then, respectability tested by the possession of a fixed property be taken as the basis of qualification, or if, as some perhaps may propose, and as is the case in France, the direct contributions of a certain amount towards the public burthens should be employed as a test, on either or both these grounds the stockholders

are entitled to be represented, while under the present law their tenure as squatters gives them no claim to be so. The government first, in their character of monopolists of land, force the most wealthy and respectable colonists to put up with a servile tenure, and then, in their character of lawgivers, recognize their political rights no more than if they were really serfs. With reference to the respectability of this class, I shall quote the words of a petition to the House of Commons on the subject of the franchise, which was agreed to at a highly influential meeting at Melbourne, but which has not yet been forwarded, in consequence, I believe, of some of the parchment rolls containing signatures having been lost. After stating the claims of squatting stockholders to the exercise of this right on the ground of property, and of direct contribution to the public revenue,* it thus proceeds:—

“That there is nothing in the position or circumstances of stockholders, which can warrant this exclusion, their body being chiefly composed of men of education, and numbering amongst them several members of the learned profession, and many retired officers of the army and navy, persons in influence and consideration second to none in the district. As a proof of which assertion may be cited the fact, that from amongst them have been selected the greater number of officers who fill the most confidential situations under the crown, and nearly the whole of the territorial magistracy.”

It is indeed absurd, that a man of education, the

* According to the estimate of the revenue for 1844, the sum likely to be raised from licenses and assessments will amount to £19,680, being about one-fourth of the whole revenue of the district.

owner of perhaps 15,000 or 20,000 sheep, and who is an extensive employer of labour, should not be entitled to vote at the election of a member, far less to sit in the Legislative Council, while, if his bullock-driver leave his service, and sets up as a water-carrier at Melbourne, occupying a house worth £20 a year, he becomes his superior in constitutional privileges. The objection to making personal chattels the basis of qualification, owing to their perishable nature, and the facility of the transfer of property in them, does not apply to stock in a country where the main wealth of the inhabitants consists in flocks and herds and in the profits derived from their produce; for there such property possesses a more permanent character than that attributed to personal chattels by the policy of the English law. So long as a man retains his license from the crown, he must retain his stock, in order to occupy his run; when through distress, or from any other cause, he parts with his stock, he also gives up his license, and embraces a totally new mode of life. The thing is as much or more a matter of notoriety than a transfer of landed property; and this it is which, in my mind, allows a broad line to be drawn between the possession of personal chattels in England and property in stock in Australia, accompanied by the possession of a depasturing license, and the payment of an annual assessment for each head.

The only other shadow of an argument against giving the elective franchise to squatters is, that they are virtually represented under the present system. This, however, is a consideration which cannot be supposed

to have influenced the framers of our new constitution, as it was one which was urged against the English reform bill, but was not considered of much weight, and justly so; for if men have rights, they are entitled to have them assured to them, and not to have them left to accident.

But, as far as the Port Phillip district is at present concerned, it makes but little difference what may be the qualification of members of the legislative council, or of the electors who return them; for as long as Port Phillip is joined to the Sydney district, and the council holds its sessions at Sydney, it is impossible that the former can be adequately represented. The number of men is very small indeed who in a new country can afford to leave their homes and the superintendence of their business for two or three months of the year, even if they were willing to incur the expense of living at Sydney, and to take a journey of six hundred miles in a wretched conveyance, over a bush road, or a voyage of eight hundred miles in a very stormy part of the southern ocean. Even in England, amongst the number of men of independent property, who can leave home without inconvenience or loss, and with all the facilities for travelling which they possess, how few men would be willing to go into parliament if its sessions were held at Gibraltar, the voyage to which would be more easily performed than that from Melbourne to Sydney? The consequence of this has been, that out of six candidates at the only election for the district, four were residents at Sydney, none of whom I believe had ever been at Port Phillip until immediately preceding the election; and of the other two one I hear

has already resigned, or is about to do so; and such has been found the inconvenience, that I do not think in future that any resident at Port Phillip will be found willing to undertake the office.

The creation of the new legislative council has had this good effect, that it has made the entire population of the Port Phillip district unanimous in their wish for their separation from Sydney. And when, in addition to what I have stated above, the state of the accounts between the two districts is taken into consideration, this will not be matter of surprise.

By returns laid by the government before the legislative council it appears that the *ordinary* revenue derived from the district of Port Phillip from the period of its first settlement until the close of the year 1842, amounted to £222,984 0 7, and that the whole expenditure actually incurred for its government during the same period amounted to £254,965 0 6½, thus making it appear that there was a balance against the *ordinary* revenue of the district of £31,980 19 11½; but, on examining the details of this return, we find that a sum of £28,863 14 6½ for the surveyor-general's department is charged against the ordinary revenue, when clearly it ought to have been charged against the *extraordinary* revenue from crown lands, as it is an expenditure incurred solely on their account. We also find a further sum of £29,464 4 5½ charged for the expenses of the establishment for the aborigines; and as by law, as well as in justice, this is a charge on the land fund it has no business to appear in the charge against the ordinary revenue. Making these deductions, the account would stand thus:

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
Ordinary expenses, as appears by auditor-general's return	254,965	0	6½
	£	s.	d.
Deduct expenses of surveyor-general's department	28,868	14	6½
Deduct expenses of aborigines' establishment	29,464	4	5½
		58,297	19 0
Expenditure really chargeable on ordinary revenue	196,637	1	6½
Balance due to the ordinary revenue of Port Phillip by the Sydney treasury	26,846	19	0¼
	223,484	0	7

RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
Ordinary revenue of Port Phillip from 1835 to 1842 inclusive	222,984	0	7

It will be thus seen that £196,637 1 6½ is all of the expenditure that is fairly chargeable on the ordinary revenue; and when we consider that of this sum £62,103 0 3 has been expended in public works, it will appear that there has been a surplus of £88,450 11 3½ after defraying the necessary current expenses of the government during that time.

It appears on the same authority that the revenue arising from the sale of crown lands in the Port Phillip district, commonly called the *extraordinary* revenue, amounted during the same period to £393,911 11 1, and that the expenses incurred for emigration to Port Phillip, and for the passages of clergymen and black protectors, amounted to £204,446 5 0½, leaving a balance in favour of the Port Phillip revenue of £189,465 6 0½; but charging against this sum the expenses of the departments of the surveyor-general, and of the aborigines, the account would stand thus:—

EXPENDITURE.			RECEIPTS.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Immigration, &c. &c.	204,446	5 0½	Revenue from crown lands in Port Phillip district	393,911	11 1
Surveyor-general's department	23,863	14 6½			
Aborigines' department	29,464	4 8½			
	353,774	4 0½			
Balance due to the extraordinary revenue of Port Phillip by the Sydney treasury	131,137	7 0½			
	393,911	11 1		393,911	11 1
There is therefore due by the Sydney treasury to the ordinary revenue of the Port Phillip district				36,346	19 0½
Due by the Sydney treasury to the extraordinary revenue of the Port Phillip district				131,137	7 0½
Total due by Sydney treasury to Port Phillip treasury				167,184	8 1

To the return of the revenue from crown lands there is a note appended by the auditor-general to this effect:—"It has been estimated that the sums invested in the purchase of land at Port Phillip were derived in nearly equal proportions from the united kingdom, Van Dieman's Land and Sydney." Now I am not aware with what object this piece of information was given. It surely could not be intended to insinuate that the Sydney people, after having purchased one-third of the land, had a right to have the purchase-money back again. If so, to carry out the principle the two remaining thirds ought to be sent, one to the united kingdom, and the other to Van Dieman's Land.

A perusal of the following statements will show that should the universal wish of the inhabitants of Port Phillip for a separation from Sydney be acceded to, there are ample funds for carrying on the separate government, and not the slightest prospect of her costing the mother country one farthing.

From papers laid on the table of the legislative council by the colonial secretary, it appears that the ordinary re-

venue of the Port Phillip district for 1844 is estimated by Mr. Latrobe at £83,390, which estimate is adopted by the governor; while the probable expenses of the civil, judicial, and other establishments were estimated as follows:

ABSTRACT

Of estimates for 1844, as laid before the Legislative Council, Port Phillip district.

	Disallowed by Legislative Council, & to be deducted.*			
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
His honour the superintendent's department; surge for two horses for his honour, at 25s 18s. each	109	16 0	2,235	16 6
Sub-treasurer's department			1,006	16 6
Customs' department			4,366	4 0
Post-office department			3,235	17 6
Harbour-master's department			1,251	12 0
Light-houses and telegraphs			730	16 0
Public works' department (I believe disallowed, but am not certain)			2,513	17 0
Public buildings	5,500	0 0	9,500	0 0
Ecclesiastical establishments of all kinds			1,960	0 0
Schools of all kinds			400	0 0
Medical establishments (I believe disallowed or reduced)			734	7 0
Judicial establishments			3,404	16 0
Sheriff's department, including expenses of witnesses, jurors, &c.			1,269	14 0
Court of Requests			626	0 0
Coroner's department			205	0 0
Water police	450	0 0	853	2 0
Police magistrates, constables, &c.	1,667	4 6	3,353	17 0
Police †				
{ Mounted £2,348 4 0				
{ Border 2,416 8 0				
{ Native 2,420 0 0				
Gael establishments			7,182	12 0
Aid of corporation of Melbourne			1,857	2 0
Supplemental note.			2,000	0 0
Harbour-master			250	0 0
Insolvent Court			723	0 0
Not included in the estimates or supplemental note, but which must be provided for.				
Crown Prosecutor			450	0 0
Crown Land Commissioners, about			2,000	0 0
Amount disallowed*	7,747	0 6	51,893	9 6
Deduct disallowed by council			7,747	0 6
Total applicable to the service of the Port Phillip district for the year 1844			44,146	8 10

* There has been no document published on authority showing the sums disallowed; so that as to this point I had to depend on the reports of the proceedings of the council, published in the newspapers. They will be found, however, pretty correct, at any rate quite enough so for the present purpose. I cannot account for the omission of the last two items in the estimate; nor is any provision made for the prosecutor or missions. It is, however, probable that these will be discontinued.

† It is a mystery to me how the mounted police, consisting of eighteen soldiers,

From these documents it appears that the estimated ordinary revenue of Port Phillip for the year 1844 amounts to £83,390, while the sums voted for the public service in that district for the same year amount only to £44,146 8 10, leaving a balance of about £39,000, which goes into the Sydney treasury, and for which the people of Port Phillip receive no equivalent, unless their share of the expenses of the governor and council be considered as such. Allowing for this £3,000 a year, there is still a balance of 36,000 lost to them. If we subtract from the estimates £4,000, the sum voted for public buildings, the expenditure on the current purposes of government would be about £40,000.

Under these circumstances there can be, as I said before, no reasonable apprehension of the colony of Port Phillip not being able to support the expenses of its government in case of its separation from Sydney; for, allowing £10,000 a year as the increased expenditure consequent upon such a step, there would still remain a sum of about £33,000 per annum applicable to the purposes of public works, and to meet contingencies. When this statement of accounts is considered, and when it is further added that the establishments of the country are, on the plea of poverty, kept on a footing inadequate to its wants—thus, for instance, that

receiving from 1s. to 1s. 2d. per diem; the border police, consisting of sixteen convict troopers, receiving no pay; and the black native police, consisting of twenty-eight aboriginal troopers, receiving no pay; even allowing £616 17s., (the amount of pay drawn by their officers,) and a liberal allowance for remounts, and wear and tear of horses, can cost £7,163 12s. for a year in a country where good horses can be had at from £15 to £30 each, where little or no artificial food is required for the horses, and where rations do not cost above 2s or 2s per man. At present their cost amounts to more than £100 per annum for each man, a pretty good allowance for convicts and blacks.

petty sessions* are not established, for fear of incurring the expense of the salaries of a constable and a clerk of the bench, and that by this means hundreds of miles of country are left without any tribunals to resort to for the adjustment of their disputes—that the police magistrates are withdrawn on the same ground—that the police force† is ridiculously disproportioned to the wants of the district—that public works, having for their object general utility and convenience, are not undertaken—and above all, that a new mode of taxation has been adopted by the establishment of district councils, and that we shall have to pay separately for police and public works, although the fund raised from the district by general taxation has not been exhausted—when all these circumstances are taken into consideration, it is not to be wondered at that a strong feeling

* By an act of council magistrates cannot hold petty sessions except in places proclaimed by the council, and there are only three of these in the district—Melbourne, Geelong, and Portland.

† With respect to the police force, there is such a mixture of parsimony and profusion, that I should perhaps have omitted mentioning it in the text. Their inadequacy may be inferred from the following facts :—There are in all seventy men, who are divided into four distinct bodies, totally independent of each other, and wearing different uniforms. Of these, the mounted police, who are commanded by a sergeant, are chiefly used in carrying despatches. The border police, consisting of twenty-four men, are divided into two bodies, of which one is in attendance on each of the two principal crown land commissioners, and are principally engaged in carrying out the squatting acts. The black police are the only body who are regularly officered, and whose other avocations do not interfere with their duties as police.

on the subject should be entertained by all classes at Port Phillip.

I should, perhaps, apologize to the reader for occupying his time with matters not of general interest ; but I look upon the subject as one of such vital importance to the district of Port Phillip, that I should consider myself guilty of a dereliction of duty did I omit this opportunity of bringing it forward.

To return to the legislative council, I have no doubt, as I said before, that, although defective in its constitution, this new assembly will be of great service to the colony generally. Assembled, however, at a period of great commercial difficulty and individual distress, in which many of its members were involved, and by which all were affected, it was scarcely to be expected that it should have taken a perfectly calm and dispassionate view of the position of the colony, or have shown that abstinence in meddling with credit which all experience has proved to be the wisest course for a legislature to pursue. Accordingly, a desire to tamper with this delicate subject, and an anxiety for a system of "Political Tinkering,"* has been exhibited by some members, which if unchecked might have worked serious mischief. Two different bills were introduced, each embodying a scheme of pledging public credit in aid of private secu-

* A Mr. Phelps Robinson, in giving his evidence before a committee of the council, winds up with this pithy observation, "What this country wants for prosperity is, a better social system in the interior, coupled with industry and economy, and no political tinkering," a sentence which ought to be printed in large letters over the speaker's chair in the council chamber.

ity. One of these was carried through the house, but the governor refused his assent to it, and it will not become law unless allowed by the queen, which it is to be hoped it will not be.* Nor has the council shown that caution in overruling the principles of the English common law which would have been becoming, and which might have saved them from passing an act which will, I fear, turn out a very inconvenient piece of legislation. I allude to what is termed the preferable lien bill.

But the only occurrence, in my opinion, really discreditable to the council was the introduction of a bill to regulate the interest of money, one of the provisions of which was to prevent above a certain rate of interest being paid or taken on foot of mortgages, made even prior to the passing of the act, and notwithstanding that a higher rate of interest might have been agreed on. It was, in fact, an act to legalize the evasion of engagements deliberately entered into, and was one of which no honourable man could have taken advantage. It was not indeed carried, but the fact of its having received

* This act is termed an act to restore public confidence, and contains a complicated scheme founded on the Prussian system of Pfande-briefe. The plan proposed is, to establish a board, who are to issue notes, which are made a legal tender between individuals, and also at the Treasury in payment of taxes, but convertible into gold or silver, on demand made to the colonial treasurer. These notes the Board is to issue, on receiving from the proprietor of land a mortgage on his property. They are to bear interest under certain regulations. In fact, government is to become the mortgagee of all the land in the country, in reality, its purchaser, and the unincumbered members of the community are to pay the purchase money.

any support, and of its not having been scouted out of the house with all the reprobation of which its forms admitted, does, in my mind, injuriously affect the character of the council. The preferable lien act is an act to give the owner of sheep, cattle, or horses, power to mortgage the wool of his sheep; or the sheep, cattle, or horses themselves, without parting with the possession (in derogation of the common law principle enforced by the statutes against fraudulent conveyances). The result of which will be to clog the transfer of such property with legal difficulties, and to make it nearly as hazardous to buy sheep, cattle, or horses, without consulting a lawyer as to title, and searching against incumbrances, as it would be to purchase a landed estate without these preliminaries, and with this additional difficulty, that there are no means of tracing the title or knowing against whom to direct searches. When you have bought a horse, and are congratulating yourself on having steered clear of splints and apavins, ringbones curbs, and corns, and all the ills that horseflesh seems peculiarly the heir to, you may discover, that when you thought you were buying a horse, you were only purchasing an equity of redemption, which your lawyer will inform you is a horse of another colour.*

* But more serious injury will be done if this bill has the effect of clogging the transfer of wool with such difficulties, as to shake the confidence of merchants in purchasing. We will suppose that A and B are two sheep owners, not very scrupulous in their mode of raising money. A mortgages the wool of the ensuing clip to an indifferent person, whom we will call X, who advances a large per centage on its value, and registers his mortgage. A shears rather early, and sells the remainder of his

Notwithstanding these errors (as they appear to me), which are perhaps to be attributed to the influence of circumstances and pressure of the times, I think that the colony have reason to be satisfied with the result of the first session of the Legislative Council. It has shown a laudable zeal in grappling with all the difficult questions of colonial politics, and the mass of information collected upon these subjects, and the able reports furnished by the committees which have been engaged in these investigations, are monuments highly creditable to the industry and talent of the gentlemen who composed them. It is indeed of the greatest importance that there should be some mode in which the opinions of the most respectable and most experienced of the colonists should be made known, and that there should be some source from which persons in power in England may derive information above all suspicion ;

interest in the wool to B, who has an understanding with him. B takes it in his own dray, and offers it for sale to a merchant in Sydney, who makes searches against any incumbrances by B, but who has nothing to lead him to suspect that the wool was not grown by him. This merchant purchases from B, and stores the wool, and presently afterwards comes the original mortgagee X, and sells the wool to satisfy his claim, and the merchant can only claim the balance after X is satisfied, and must bring his action against B to indemnify himself. The possibility of the occurrence of a case like this is calculated to do an injury, and the very fact of a merchant having to make a search must operate as a clog on mercantile transactions. It is so far lucky, that the difficulty of identifying the wool on the sheep's back with the wool sold to the merchant will go far to prevent persons advancing money on this security, and so to neutralize its bad effect.

and this opportunity is afforded by the evidence collected by the committees of the legislative assembly. The deportment of the members in debate (as far, at least, as can be collected from the public prints) has been marked by a courtesy of demeanour towards each other, and an absence of anything like an unfair imputation of motives, or unpleasant personal allusion, highly creditable to their feelings as gentlemen. When too they have differed from the governor, the expression of opinions used by the house has always been in most respectful terms, showing a proper sense of what was due to others as well as to itself. I repeat, therefore, that I think the colonists generally have reason to be satisfied with the result of this first attempt at self-government, and to be grateful to the home government for having conferred on them this unsolicited boon. And while I regret that the usury bill should have received any support in the council, which I consider a blot on its character, and while I feel unjustly treated, as belonging to a body without reason excluded from all participation in the elective franchise, I still, as a colonist, join cordially in both these sentiments.

The same act of parliament which established the Legislative Council, established also through New South Wales rural corporations, called district councils, which have power to tax property within their districts for the purpose of making roads, building bridges, paying one-half of the expenses of the police force and other local objects. The Legislative Council, and in its default the governor, is to declare what property is to be liable to taxation. These councils are elective, and the qualifi-

cation for members and electors is at present the same as that of those to the Legislative Council. The squatters being excluded from these councils, petitioned the governor and council that their property in stock might not be made subject to taxation by, and be placed at the mercy of a body over whom they have no control; and this request being considered reasonable, landed property alone has been declared subject to taxation for these purposes, so that as long as this remains the case, the squatters have on this ground no cause for complaint. As in Port Phillip the proportion of land yielding a profitable return is very small, no tax of any amount can be raised without bearing very hard on the landed interest. The consequence is, that the district councils will not vote any salaries to the officers whom they have been obliged to elect, and there being likewise no funds to employ persons to make any assessment, or even to hire a room for the council to meet in, nobody will advance money or make himself liable for these expenses, and the thing was, when I left Melbourne, in February, 1844, at a dead stand.

As if to verify the vulgar adage that "It never rains but it pours," just before the arrival in the colony of the act of parliament, establishing these rural corporations in every county of New South Wales, the governor, with the advice of the old council, had established a municipal corporation in Sydney, and another in Melbourne, so that now we have no want of corporations, each with a salaried staff of warden, or mayor, treasurer, secretary, surveyor, &c. As when Truth, trampled under foot of men, fled from the earth, and took refuge

in heaven, so the spirit of corporations, being bullied, and insulted, and reformed in England, seems to have taken refuge in New South Wales. But in her flight she has lost her gorgeous trappings, and her luxurious habits. We have a mayor, it is true, but he reminds one of Martinus Scriblerus' simple idea of a lord mayor, abstracted from the notion of his horse-fur gown and gold chain. We have our aldermen too, but what is an alderman abstracted from the idea of turtle soup; he is the worse counterfeit of the two. Then we have our councillors, who answer more nearly to their European brethren. These officers are all elective. Seriously speaking, however, the corporations have shown an anxiety to be active in the discharge of their duties; but the general want of money, which is felt more in Melbourne than in the rural parts of the district, has naturally made them slow to impose heavy rates; while the ridiculous width of the principal streets makes the forming and keeping them in order to be accompanied by very great expense. The mayor's salary is three hundred pounds a year. He has, to a certain extent, to perform the duties of a police magistrate, there being none now at Melbourne, and also to preside at the meetings of the municipal council, which are held frequently.

CHAPTER VII.

MONETARY CONFUSION—ITS CAUSES—EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL—REMARKS.

" This world is the best that we live in
 To lend, or to spend, or to give in ;
 But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
 'Tis the very worst world that ever was known."

*Quoted by Washington Irving as
 " Inn Window Poetry."*

I HAVE alluded more than once to the depressed state of the colony with regard to money matters, or, as it has been called in the council, the state of monetary confusion. I have casually remarked, too, on the depreciation of all kind of property. The value of stock at Port Phillip may be taken to be about one-fifth of what it was four years ago—I mean stock sold fairly, and without precipitation; for when there have been forced sales, property has been actually given away. Under the latter circumstances sheep have been sold at Sydney at less than one shilling each; cattle for ten shillings; horses for fourteen shillings; and land at Maitland, on the Hunter river, at one shilling and three pence per acre. A Mr. Bourne, in his evidence before the committee on the insolvent law, mentions a case where between 2,000 and 3,000 sheep, 150 head of cattle, a splendid station, with drays, farming implements, &c. &c. were sold for £250. The wool on the

backs of the sheep he estimated at £400. This is by no means a solitary instance. These tremendous sacrifices at forced sales are not only to be attributed to the want of ready money, but also in a measure to the defective working of the insolvent law, which has encouraged an immensity of fraud, and under the operation of which there is in general so little to be recovered from an insolvent estate, that it is not worth the creditor's while to look after it, and see that it is not sacrificed. Sixpence in the pound is about the average which has been realized on estates which have gone through the Insolvent Court at Sydney. I do not know the proportion at Melbourne.

In order to give a succinct view of the causes of this depression, I do not think that I can do better than make an extract from the report of the committee of the Legislative Council on immigration, which briefly recapitulates them. After going into the present state of the labour-market, and stating their conviction of the absolute necessity of restoring emigration from Europe, the report goes on thus :—

“ The proceeds arising from the sale of waste lands of the colony have been hitherto appropriated for this purpose. During the last six years no less a sum than £1,000,000 sterling has been expended in the introduction of emigrants from the United Kingdom. The expenditure of so large an amount, and its sudden abstraction from the colony, has been productive of consequences which your committee cannot but regard as disastrous, and as originating to a considerable extent the embarrassments under which the community are now suffering.

“ The advantages which the colony had previously enjoyed

from the supply of cheap labour, under the transportation system, had, conjointly with the advanced price of wool, created a high degree of prosperity. A spirit of enterprise extended itself through the colony, and its waste lands were eagerly purchased at the government sales. The result of this speculative disposition was, that enormous accumulations of money in the government treasury were effected. The sums thus realized to the public credit were subsequently deposited in the several colonial banks,* and an interest on these deposits was exacted by the government successively at rates of four, five, and seven per cent. The banks were under the necessity of extending their discounting transactions in a corresponding degree, thus keeping alive an inordinate and unjustifiable spirit of speculation throughout the community. The sudden expenditure of the whole accumulation which had been made from the land sales in immigration, and the immediate curtailment of discounts by the banks upon the withdrawal of the government deposits, have produced a degree of exhaustion which has more than equalled the previous excitement.

"Simultaneously with the occurrences above enumerated, and tending to aggravate their unfortunate influence, was the measure of her majesty's government for raising the upset price of land from five shillings to twelve shillings, and subsequently from twelve shillings to twenty shillings an acre. The adoption of this scale of augmented upset prices has been a complete annihilation of the land fund; neither the profits of sheep farming nor agriculture can ever justify the investment of capital in land at these prices; nor do your committee believe that any capitalists will ever be induced to emigrate from the mother country whilst such a system regulating land sales is in force."

* By the evidence of the Colonial treasurer, before the committee on monetary confusion, it appears that the balance in favour of government in the banks was, on an average, in 1837, £127,000. In October, 1840, the amount was £270,000. It arrived subsequently at the sum of £381,000, which was the highest amount. Between November, 1840, and November, 1841, government drew out of the banks £260,000. Government received on these deposits at first $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, then 4 per cent, and finally 7 per cent.

Although the suddenness of the withdrawal of large sums from circulation did, no doubt, cause a great shock to public credit, yet was it the extent to which speculation had been previously carried, particularly in the purchase of land, which was in my mind the real original evil. I can therefore by no means acquiesce in the proposition so broadly put forward by the committee on the sale of crown lands, and adopted by that on immigration, which I shall give in the no measured terms adopted by the former :—

“But the greatest, the most fatal error connected with the sale of the waste lands of this colony was committed in the appropriation of the revenue derived from thence to the purposes of immigration. A million sterling has in some shape or other been appropriated to this purpose. It was forgotten that capital and labour, as elements of colonization, should exist in a new country in proportion to each other; and it was a fatal mistake to send the one out to bring the other in. The circulating medium, which, like the blood in the animal system, diffused life and activity through every part, has been withdrawn from use and the colony is now in a state of inanition. What renders the matter worse, is the fact that a large portion of the sum paid for land, and thus applied to the purposes of immigration was borrowed.”

I admit the general principle that capital and labour should exist in proportion to each other; but they should also exist in proportion to land. But when was the equilibrium first disturbed? Was it not when land to the amount of a million was purchased from the government? And that disturbance would have continued, if government had held the money in its own hands, or even applied it to general purposes, the only

difference being, that in such a case there would have been land without either capital or labour. To use their own illustration, if the blood all goes to the head—a man dies just as much as if he was bled to death—the only difference being between apoplexy and inanition. If indeed government had in the first instance retained the money in its hands, and then lent it back to the purchasers of land under the system of *Pfandbriefe*, this might have acted like cataplasms to the natural body, and the circulating medium have been thus re-distributed through the body politic—in short, things would have been much where they started. But unfortunately there is no movement in civil or political life equivalent to that which follows the drill-sergeant's command of "as you were." But I do not think it is necessary to enter into these abstract considerations in order to account for a great deal of the difficulty which has arisen, the fact contained in the last part of this extract being sufficient to explain a great part of it—"What renders matters the worse, *a large portion of the money paid for the land was borrowed.*" If it had been added that far the greater part of the land was bought on speculation, in order to sell again at an enormous advance to expected immigrants—that a small number of men, having a large command of capital, attempted a monopoly with this object, and that this speculation failed—that while the land yielded no return, the interest on the borrowed capital had to be paid—sufficient cause of ruin might have been discovered without looking for its origin in the subsequent disbursement of the purchase-money, "this greatest, this most fatal error," as it is

called. That land was purchased at Port Phillip with the object I have mentioned, I know to be a fact; and as to great part of the £400,000 worth of land bought there, I can speak with confidence. Men attempted to play the same game with regard to land which (if they be not belied) has been more than once tried by merchants at Sydney with respect to tea and sugar, namely, to purchase the whole supply in the market, and then to retail it out at immense profit to the consumer. At Melbourne at the time their conduct was considered oppressive, as taking an unfair advantage of their command of capital, and they were commonly called there land sharks. One Sydney house alone purchased £44,000 worth of land at Port Phillip in one year—they are now insolvent. Another very wealthy firm at Sydney were also purchasers to a very large amount, but what I do not exactly know. In my mind the real subject of complaint against the government is this, that by putting up comparatively small quantities of land at a time, and by holding the sales at distant intervals, they did, under the specious terms of limiting the supply to the demand, (I do not say knowingly, but in effect) play into the hands of the monopolists. Many of the newly-arrived settlers at that time were forced to buy land at any price. Several had wooden houses, and all of them had hundreds of useless things. Store rent and house rent were dreadfully high, and the expense of living in Melbourne ruinous. To persons so circumstanced land became, in a financial point of view, as much an article of prime necessity as air or water in a natural one; and it is this

class of men, driven to the wall between the land-jobber and the government, who excite my sympathy; and if the latter had had a monopoly of water, they might with as much mercy have sold it by auction by twenty butts at a time, under the specious pretence of limiting the supply to the demand, allowing the monopolist to purchase at the high price which his command of capital empowered him to offer, leaving it to him to retail it in gallons-full to the consumer at a ruinous advance.

I recollect the dismay with which the announcement of a land sale at the end of 1840 was received by some of the minor fry of speculators at Melbourne. This was put off by the governor, and the mischief was staved off for a time. But when Lord John Russell's measure was announced, making all surveyed land open to selection at £1 per acre, the bubble burst, and the ruin of the men who had speculated in land with borrowed capital was from that day certain, no matter what became of the purchase-money, and whether it were expended in immigration or otherwise; just in the same way that a merchant who had speculated to the same extent, and under similar circumstances, to obtain a monopoly of sugar, would be ruined by an arrival in the market of an unlimited supply. I do not say that all men who speculated in land did so with the object of creating a monopoly: many were, no doubt, deceived by the fictitious price which land attained through the arts of others. Nor do I by any means, in what I have said above, wish to insinuate that Sir George Gipps was aware of the oppressive tendency of this system.

All I regret is, his having allowed his talents as a financier to get the better of his judgment as a statesman, and by the encouragement given to the monopolists having forced the *bonâ fide* settler to pay an exorbitant price for his land. But though I have thought it right to combat the opinion so broadly put forward in the report which I have quoted, yet I by no means deny that this sudden withdrawal of capital did *accelerate* the crisis, which had in any case been rendered necessary by the causes detailed before—namely, the abstraction of government expenditure, the rise in wages consequent on the withdrawal of the convicts, the great fall in the price of wool, and excessive speculation encouraged, no doubt, by the facility with which individuals obtained accommodation from the banks.

To return to the committee on immigration. After going into the subject which I have alluded to, they proceed to recommend the council to apply to the home government for a grant of £500,000 for the purpose of carrying on immigration, as a means of relieving the United Kingdom of its redundant population, and as a kind of bonus to the colony for having already expended a million on this object. In default of this being successful, to apply for a loan of a million, chargeable on the land fund, and guaranteed by the home government. A reduction in the upset price of land they however consider as an essential preliminary to any sales being effected. They further recommend that a remission should be made to emigrants in the purchase of lands on their arrival in the colony, equivalent to the amount they may have paid for their own conveyance to the

colony, or for that of their families and servants, and this without the emigrant's being forced to place any money in the hands of the commissioners at home. The present mode of lodging money in the commissioners' hands in England being, as they remark, "one to which emigrants may naturally feel some repugnance, as it is only reasonable to suppose that almost every person will be desirous to retain the disposal of his capital in his own hands until he can become personally conversant with the character of the country to which he is about to emigrate." The scale of remission which they recommend is as follows:—£80 for a cabin passenger, £40 for an intermediate, and £25 for a steerage passenger—the designation of these sums being, however, considered as having relation to a reduced price of land.

"The only value," say they, "that can be given to waste land must be communicated to it by population, must be subject to its settlement, and contingent on the improvement effected upon it. The high upset price affixed by her majesty's government is an anticipated value, that in a great majority of cases will not be realized for centuries to come. The crown lands of the colony must consequently remain unsold, unless a different system be adopted from that now in force."

With respect to the state of the labour-market, the report contains the following observations:—*

"Whilst your committee are unanimously of opinion that the present supply of agricultural labour in the colony is inadequate

* I must apologise to the gentleman who drew up this report for transposing several of the paragraphs in such a way as to suit my arrangement of the subject.

to its wants, and that it is indispensable to its future prosperity that a periodical supply of emigrants from the mother country should be introduced into it, they nevertheless, in arriving at this conclusion, deem it necessary to specify the description and number of immigrants that it may hereafter be deemed necessary to introduce within a given period, inasmuch as they feel persuaded that a large, if not the entire, amount of the difficulty now experienced by a portion of the labouring population in Sydney, arising from want of employment in their respective handicraft trades, is referable to the fact that this class of persons ought never to have been introduced into the colony at all, or at all events only in much smaller proportion than that in which they were actually brought to it. The evil thus created to the colony is great. Its resources have to a large extent been expended in the introduction of a class of persons unsuited to its wants—unproductive, so far as regards its great staple commodity, and who, from the want of work, and the consequent cry of distress amongst them, discredit the statement that the species of labour really applicable to, and indispensable for, the country is needed. Many of the artisans brought to the colony by the land fund are now quitting it, and several are proceeding to South America, and, by the expression of their disappointed feelings, (although several are carrying with them considerable sums of money, the accumulation of past earnings in the colony,) conveyed to their friends and connections in the mother country, are likely to create erroneous and unfounded impressions as to the real capabilities of the colony as an eligible field for immigration.

“Neither has the selection that has hitherto been made of even pastoral and farm labourers in the United Kingdom been unexceptionable in its character. Labourers burdened with numerous and young families have formed no inconsiderable proportion of those who have been sent to the colony at the charge of the land fund. However desirable it may be to have (and in many respects it is undoubtedly so) the basis of a future population thus presented to us, its advantages are counterbalanced by corresponding difficulties. The younger members of such families are incapable of aiding in the production of means for their own subsistence, and, when very numerous, form a heavy burthen to the employer. A shepherd, with a

wife, and five or six young children, requires an amount of rations for their support fully equal to the services he can render, or at all events only justifying the employer in giving a rate of money wages so small as to create dissatisfaction on the part of the labourer, who is but too generally indisposed to make the requisite allowance for the peculiar circumstances in which he is placed.

“With the qualification above mentioned, your committee have no hesitation in expressing their belief that four thousand shepherds and farm labourers would readily find employment at rates of wages from £10 to £12 per annum, with lodging, fuel, and rations.

“No field, your committee apprehend, can be selected for emigration that holds out a fairer prospect to the emigrant himself than New South Wales, providing the selection be made of such as are suited to its wants. The salubrity of the climate—the excess of physical comforts of life—the constant employment presented in rural or grazing occupation—the moderate rate of wages that may be ensured—constitute advantages to the labouring emigrant which it appears questionable whether he can command elsewhere.”

The gentlemen who composed the committee, from whose able report I have quoted so largely, were the colonial secretary, the auditor-general, Mr. Icely, Dr. Lang, Mr. Murray, Mr. Wentworth, Mr. Walker, Mr. Macarthur, Dr. Nicholson, and Mr. Bowman, men of great consideration and high standing in the colony—many of them large landed proprietors, and who, if they were capable of listening to the dictates of a selfish and unenlightened policy, might think perhaps that they served their own interest by assisting to keep up the present high upset price of crown land. In their recommendations on this subject I may add that they are not only borne out by the report of the committee of crown lands, and by the expressed opinion of every

witness examined on the subject, but that their views are in accordance with those of every man in the colony, whether squatter or landowner, capable of forming an opinion.*

The committee express their opinion that 4,000 shepherds and farm labourers would find employment. I had myself on independent grounds arrived at a conclusion which tallies with this, and which gives 1,200 as the number which would readily find employment at £10 or £12 per annum in the Port Phillip district, supposing no change to be made in the present system of land sales or the squatting tenure.† But if there were a confidence on the part of the colonists that a stream of immigration would be kept up sufficient to

* Similar views are entertained by the settlers in some of the other Australian colonies. To such an extent was this carried in Western Australia, that the executive council (the nominees of the crown) passed a set of resolutions condemnatory of the system, in opposition to the wishes of Governor Hutt, and notwithstanding his protest.

† This conclusion is thus roughly arrived at. The annual increase of sheep is about one-third of the whole, after making all deductions; and three men are required to every 2,000 sheep. In the Port Phillip district there were, in December, 1843, about 1,800,000 sheep, the increase on which would be about 600,000 for this year. These would give employment to 900 shepherds and hut-keepers. Allowing 100 more as additional bullock-drivers, shearers, stock-keepers, &c., the whole would amount to 1,000; but as we may reckon that the sudden influx of labourers would have the effect of reducing wages to £16 or £12 per annum, 200 more would be pretty sure to find employment in agriculture. The increase of black cattle does not involve a corresponding increase in the labour required to attend them; and so I have made but a small allowance on this score.

retain wages at this moderate rate, agriculture, vine-growing, and other pursuits of this kind, would no doubt be largely engaged in, and employment provided for a still larger number. If, in addition to this, stockholders could be put on a better footing with respect to tenure, so as to be enabled with prudence to make improvements, and to engage in tillage with spirit, there is scarcely any limit which we can assign to the ultimate employment of labour, save that afforded by the want of a market beyond a certain amount for our surplus agricultural produce.

CHAPTER VIII.

REMARKS ON SOME OBJECTS OF INTEREST AMONGST THE NATURAL FEATURES AND PRODUCTIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

I REGRET, that not being a naturalist, I can give no information with regard to the natural history of the country, which is likely to prove interesting to the scientific world; still, as a few observations on the obvious peculiarities of nature may prove so to the general reader, I shall give mine merely with the remark, that not being scientifically acquainted with these subjects, I shall not answer for the accuracy of anything not apparent to an observer of ordinary intelligence and information. In the first place then with respect to the formation of the country. The stone most common near Melbourne is a whinstone of a grey and sometimes of a brown colour, which is known to the settlers as iron stone. Sandstone is also found, some of which is an excellent building stone. Granite occurs of a very fine quality in the hills about twelve miles to the north-west of Melbourne, and also at Station Peak, about thirty miles to the south-west. Limestone is found near Station Peak, and along the south coast both near Geelong and towards Western Port, on the other side of the bay. Quartz rock and slate are found mixed with the trap formation about forty miles to the west of Melbourne; and granite occurs again at Mount Emu, about eighty miles further in the same direction. Beyond

that, to the westward and southward, the country is chiefly of the trap formation, and other traces of igneous action are very obvious; Mount Elephant, Mount Rouse, Mount Eels, Mount Eccersley, and many others, being evidently the craters of extinct volcanoes; and over the whole country are found pumice-stone, scorizæ, and a quantity of small pebbles, of a glazed metallic appearance, something resembling shot, which appear evidently derived from the same source. Lignite is found on the shores of Port Phillip, near Western Port. Some fossil remains of a very large size have been lately discovered near Macedon; but it is not yet ascertained to what animal they belong. They have been sent to England, I believe, to Professor Owen.

In a previous chapter I have remarked upon the soil of the district.

The principal trees are the six kinds of Eucalyptus, namely, the white gum, the red gum, the bastard box or peppermint, the box, the stringy bark, and the iron bark. All of these have leaves if not identical, yet so nearly similar, that to a casual observer they appear alike. Hence the varieties are generally distinguished by a name indicating some peculiarity in the bark or timber. Thus the stringy bark derives its name from the nature of the bark, which, when stripped, can be beaten into fibres resembling those of the cocoa-nut used in the coir rope of India, and from which a rude kind of rope is sometimes made. Use is also made of this bark, as well as that of the box tree, to roof the huts of settlers in whose neighbourhood it abounds. The fibrous nature of the bark of this tree makes it

peculiarly inflammable. This produces an extraordinary effect in those forests where they have been singed, as most of them have been, by the bush-fires. You see a thick forest of peculiarly straight trees, reaching to about one hundred and twenty feet in height, and without a branch for about seventy or eighty feet from the ground, with their round, straight stems perfectly black, while the branches at the top, and the underwood at the bottom, are of the most brilliant green, looking as if a forest of gigantic ebony rulers had taken to budding like Aaron's rod. It is a singular fact, that the white gum sheds its bark every year. When this process is completed, the trees of this species have the appearance of having been stripped of their bark, their smooth, white stems forming the strongest contrast with the black trunks of the stringy bark, with which they are sometimes, though not often, mixed; for here, as I believe in most aboriginal forests, one tree, with its appropriate underwood, prevails for miles, and then another as exclusively occupies the adjoining tract, there being but little intermixture, save on the confines of their respective domains. Though all the trees of the Eucalyptus family have leaves so very much alike, (something similar also to the English sally tree,) yet does the dissimilarity in the bark create such a difference of character, that two trees can scarcely be more unlike than the iron bark and the box tree; the former with a rough bark, something like that of the cork tree, and of a rich brown colour, while the bark of the latter is of a silvery white, very much resembling that of the British ash. This illustrates a remark which I have

met with in a book of directions for pencil drawing, which states that the same handling may be used for the main body of the foliage of every tree, reserving the distinctive touches for such parts as come sharp off the light, and more particularly for the stem. All the varieties of the Eucalyptus family produce a highly astringent gum or resin, which varies slightly in the different kinds. It is not transparent in any, is very brittle, and not adhesive. The gum tree is also remarkable for producing manna, which (though quite different from the manna of commerce) answers completely to that described by Moses as the food of the children of Israel in the wilderness. It is found in the mornings under the trees, and disappears in the heat of the day. It occurs in small masses, resembling in form and colour pieces of ordinary starch, though scarcely so large or so white. The taste is very much that of macaroons, sweet, with a flavour of bitter almonds. I say this is distilled from the gum tree, though many people suppose that it is secreted by an insect, known to the settlers as the locust, though not really of that family. My reason for imagining this to be an unfounded supposition is, that I have found manna under trees when there had not been a locust in the neighbourhood for months; in short, I think I have established a clear *alibi*. The leaves of all these trees are highly aromatic when bruised. Next in importance to the Eucalyptus family come the Mimosas. Of these there are nine varieties with which I am acquainted in the Port Phillip district, and I know that there are several more; of these the principal is the lightwood or

blackwood of the settlers. It is a beautiful tree, something like the ilex or holm-oak of England, but of a brighter green. In rich lands (of which, indeed, it is a common indication) it grows to a considerable size, and the timber is sometimes used for making furniture. The gold, the silver, the green, and black wattles (of the settlers), with several others which have received no distinctive names, are varieties of this family. They are all very graceful shrubs, and though differing from each other in several respects, are all adorned in spring with clusters of golden flowers, which have the perfume of the May-thorn. The bark of the green and black wattles is that which forms so valuable an article of export. Most of the varieties of mimosa produce a gum which is highly adhesive, transparent, and tasteless, having, in fact, much of the qualities of the gum-arabic. When to these are added the bright green cherry tree, or Australian cypress, the melancholy sheoak, and the deformed honeysuckle, there is left but little in addition to the minor shrubs to fill up the forests of this part of Australia, which, however, are deficient neither in beauty nor variety. It is known to most people, that all the trees of this country are evergreen; but the leaves being small, the foliage light, and the colour of the young shoots of the tenderest green, they have nothing of that gloom, which has induced a French writer to characterize evergreens as the mourning robe of summer, but the gay attire of winter. On the edges of swampy rivers, and in swamps generally, grows the tea tree, which is so called from its leaves being occasionally used as a substitute for tea. It is a

sure indication of a spring when there is no surface-water.

There is a considerable variety of beautiful flowers at Port Phillip, (though in this respect it falls short of Sydney.) Among these are conspicuous the Epacridæ, the *Kennedia procumbens*, or scarlet, pea-shaped creeper, the beautiful purple creeper, (*Glycine decurrens*), the geranium, the pink convolvulus, the *mesembrianthemum*, and the native indigo. But the most peculiar, as well as one of the most beautiful amongst them, is a species of waritau, the flower of which grows in a cluster of six or eight petals together: the petal is of a peculiar shape, something in the form of an ammonite shell. There are two varieties of this flower—one a bright red, going into white, and the other orange: they have that beautiful waxen appearance also observable in the epacridæ. In the red variety, the stamens form an important feature, being very numerous, and of a brilliant colour. It has been said that the plants of New South Wales have no perfume. This is not the case; all the varieties of the mimosa have a scent much like that of the May-thorn, only more powerful. In general the most brilliant flowers are not those most highly perfumed. The geranium is, however, an exception to this rule. This plant has another peculiarity, that, although in its flower and general appearance nearly identical with some of the European pelargoniums, it has a tuberose root. The sarsaparilla has lately been discovered in the Port Fairy country. It is said to be of good quality; but this remains to be proved. Of the native grasses there is a considerable variety. Of these

the kangaroo grass is the most succulent, and makes splendid food for horses, cattle, and sheep. I do not think a horse will do more work on any kind of feeding than when fed on this grass, after it has begun to be turned by the sun. When eaten down close it forms a good sod. In addition to the grasses, there are numerous herbs, of which stock of all kind are very fond; and there is scarcely any shrub which they will not eat with avidity during part of the year when the leaves are tender.

I may here mention a singular fungus, which emits a brilliant, but pale green light at night. In the day it is of a dead white colour. I have seen it as much as four inches in diameter. The eatable mushroom is very plentiful, and of large size.

Most of the four-footed animals, and many of the birds of the country, are pretty well known by description. The kangaroo is still found in great abundance in all parts of the district which are thickly wooded, well watered, and not stocked with sheep; as wherever these animals graze, they banish not only kangaroos, but horses and cattle. Whole herds are to be met with in the Dandenong district, within twenty miles of Melbourne, which is almost entirely a cattle country. There are two species, the forester and the brush kangaroo. The male of the former species, when full grown, reaches the height of six or seven feet when sitting on his gams, and is, when brought to bay, or (in the language of the Australian Nimrods) *set up*, a formidable antagonist, tearing the dogs with his hind claws, and sometimes even attacking men. He is called an old

man. A friend of mine, not much used to the bush, was rather shocked by one of our shepherds telling him, on his making some inquiries about the sporting in that part of the country, that he had only on the day before "missed fire at an old man." The brush kangaroo is much smaller. Opossums, flying squirrels, kangaroo rats, and wild cats (a kind of weasel), are plentiful all over the country, and form the chief support of the natives. The wild dog, too, I regret to say, is not on the decrease, and their boldness is matter of serious annoyance to the sheep-owner. The emu is well known, and I need do no more than allude to it. The egg of this bird is something smaller than that of the ostrich, and of a beautiful dark green colour. The wild turkey, or rather bustard, is found in great abundance in many districts of the country. I have seen as many as forty together in a flat of not more than thirty acres. I counted them out of curiosity. They are generally very wary, and it requires a good deal of management to get within shot. The best plan is to have a horse that will stand fire, and you then have a good chance of getting close, as they do not much mind a man on horseback. I have been so close to them in this way as to be tempted to fire my pistol at one of them. They are excellent birds to eat, in flavour something like the grouse. The outside part of the breast is dark brown meat, while the part next the bone, as well as the legs, are white. The bronze-winged pigeon is one of the easiest birds to shoot; it is by no means shy, and is very good eating. They are birds of passage, and abound in summer. If you wait near a

water-hole about sunset on a warm evening, you may shoot a great number. There is a great variety of wild ducks, and teal. Snipe are plentiful in the western country at the latter end of winter and beginning of spring. The Australian snipe is a larger bird than the common gill snipe of the British Islands, and is, I believe, more nearly akin to what is called the solitary snipe. Quails are abundant all over the country. White cockatoos are good eating, but are watchful, shy birds. Besides these, which are interesting in a culinary (or perhaps it would sound better to say in a sporting) point of view, there are thousands of parrots, parrots, and lorries of various species, and of every colour in the rainbow. It has been said that there are no singing birds in Australia. This is not the fact; and I believe it was originally said to finish an antithesis, that as the flowers had no scent, the birds had no song. There are many undistinguished little birds that warble very sweetly. There are perhaps no professionals, like the lark, the nightingale, and thrush, of the British Isles; but there is very good amateur music amongst them. The robin-redbreast is worthy of particular mention. It is a beautiful little bird, with black and grey body, and bright scarlet breast; also the sky blue and black wren, known as the superb warbler. There are also numbers of swallows, which are so familiar, that it is difficult to keep them out of the huts. They differ from the European swallow in having more of a bluish tint in the dark parts on their backs, and a kind of brick-dust colour about the throat. They also warble very sweetly. There is a crow in Australia exactly similar to a rook, with this exception, that they

have white eyes, and their caw has a most ludicrously dismal sound. The shrike crow, the magpie of the settlers, is very numerous, and has a deep melodious whistle, which always announces the dawn of day. Cranes are numerous; one of these (the native companion, as it is called) is about six feet high. The hawks are also a very numerous tribe, and consist of a great number of varieties. The eagle hawk is a large and handsome bird, but is, I believe, an impostor, being neither an eagle nor a hawk, but only a vulture. I should not omit honourable mention of the laughing jackass, whose name (derived from its loud peculiar note) is familiar in Europe. It is an ugly grey bird, somewhat larger than a crow, with an amazing strong beak, with which it has the reputation of destroying serpents.

There is much to interest the entomologist at Port Phillip. Ants are very numerous, and there is a considerable variety of species. One of these is called the soldier-ant; it is about three quarters of an inch long. Two of these animals will, if irritated, fight until one of them is killed—whence the name. These insects are of all sizes, from that of the soldier-ant down to that of a pin's head. There are luckily no white ants amongst them, and those which there are, are not troublesome; indeed they are sometimes of use, as they destroy fleas, which abound to a great extent all over the country, and are a great nuisance. Mosquitoes are seldom troublesome; they are dreadful at Sydney. There is a great variety of spiders, the largest of which is called the tarantula, and by the old hands the *triantelope*; its bite is said to be poisonous; but I never knew any

person to be injured by it. There is an insect called the mason-bee, which builds up a kind of cell in the chinks of a wall, or other convenient spot, in which he stores up great numbers of spiders of the most beautiful colours—some green, some yellow, with enamelled looking backs of different colours and patterns. I have seen as many as fifty in one of these cells, all in high preservation. There is also another singular-looking spider, with black body and red legs, whose style of colouring gives it something the effect of a mail coach. Locusts and grasshoppers sometimes appear in great numbers, and do considerable damage in gardens, but do not at all approach the descriptions which one reads of the African locusts.

There are several kinds of poisonous snakes; but they are not numerous. November and March are the months in which they are most seen; they never appear after April or before October. The natives are sometimes killed by them; but I do not recollect hearing of a white man being so.

In this catalogue I have limited myself principally to those animals which force themselves on the attention of mankind by the possession, or reputed possession of some useful or noxious quality, or by some other means, and which therefore may prove interesting to any person thinking of emigrating. It would be easy to swell the list almost indefinitely; but I see no good to be attained by doing so.

CHAPTER IX.

PRACTICAL HINTS TO EMIGRANTS—CONCLUSION.

HAVING given the best idea I could of the Port Phillip district, and the inducements it holds out to the emigrant, which seem to me to be very considerable, and to arise from its natural, and therefore permanent advantages, and at the same time not having attempted to conceal the sacrifices necessarily consequent on all emigration to a new country, and those more peculiarly attending it in this colony, but which, as they can be removed by the interference of the legislature, I should hope would be but temporary,* I allude now to the tenure of land, and the mode in which it is disposed of by the crown, and not to monetary difficulties, which, on the contrary, I consider an advantage to the new settler, as they enable him to purchase every thing at a very low rate, thereby enhancing the value of his capital. Having thus, with as much impartiality as I can command, laid before the public the means of forming an opinion on this subject, I will now give to those who think that the inducements to emigrate to

* I am happy to say, that there is a prospect of some improvement being made in the position of the squatters, as by recent accounts from the colony it appears that Sir George Gipps has recommended to the home government a course which, I understand, is likely to prove highly favourable to them.

Port Phillip outweigh the drawbacks, and who intend acting upon that opinion by adopting it as their home, such practical hints as I may think of service in carrying this intention into effect.

To a gentleman, a married man in moderate circumstances, who can land at Melbourne with a capital of from two to three thousand pounds, I should say that he ought to take with him such things as are likely to be conducive to his comforts, and which he may happen to have already, but that he should not buy many things of the kind for this purpose. A sofa and a couple of easy chairs would be useful on the voyage out, as well as when he arrives; and as they might stand either in his cabin or in the cuddy, they ought not to cost any thing for freight. Carpets are very useful, particularly a small Turkey carpet from twelve to fourteen feet square; so are curtains. I should also recommend a moderate quantity of plate, and table-linen of course. These things, if taken, should be well packed in packages of convenient size; and they are none of them things that would occupy much room, or be liable to much freight. Books, of course, a man should supply himself with. Even a pianoforte (if the womankind are fond of music) is not to be despised, nor pictures thrown away. I have known many an evening pass agreeably in a bush-hut with the aid of a pianoforte and some singing; and then one or two good pictures set off the homeliest room. What I mean to express is this, that if a man have things of this kind already, it is better that he should bring them with him than sell them by auction, probably

at a great sacrifice, and either go without them, or have to buy them at Melbourne. The means of transport through the country are to be had at a very trifling expense, and freight from England is very low. There is now no necessity for roughing it; and the days are gone when, according to Hood, the pianoforte was gutted to make a press. "Quand on est mort, c'est pour long temps," says the French proverb; and so it is when a man emigrates; and he should remember that he is settling himself for the rest of his days, and that that man makes the best settler, and the best man, and probably the most prosperous one too, who has a cheerful home to return to, and happy faces to welcome him when the occupations of the day are over. It is only fair, too, that women who sacrifice so much in leaving their native country, should have their tastes consulted and their comforts attended to, and be put to no greater privations than circumstances absolutely demand. It was the custom amongst the ancient Greeks and Romans to carry with them, when they migrated, their household gods, their Lares and Penates, not more as the objects of religious observance, than as memorials of their former homes, and symbols of their national identity; and thus, in the spirit of this beautiful emblem, the old world customs and the polished usages of English civilization should be cherished round the hearth of the Australian settler, as mementos of the home of his fathers, and to identify his children with the race from which they are sprung. While I say all this, I am by no means an advocate for extravagance, or for a man's running any risk of being pinched for

money. I am aware that he can enjoy nothing when this is the case; but all which I have enumerated may be done at a small original outlay, and with no additional expense. It is the habitual indulgence in the use of foreign imported articles, expensive wines, bottled ales and porter, and preserved delicacies of all kinds, instead of being contented with the simple but plentiful supply afforded by the station at no expense, that would really injure a man's pocket. This, which when carried beyond what a man can fairly afford, is one of the worst modes of wasting money, cannot in general be laid to the charge of the bushmen, but was some years ago far too common in and about Melbourne.

But to return to my inventory. I now come to articles of greater necessity, with which, or some substitute for them, a man must be supplied. The best kind of mattresses are those made of horse-hair, and they are dear in Australia. I should recommend a good supply of them, also of fine blankets. Cotton sheets are universally in use, and are in hot climates preferred to linen by people accustomed to them. I should also recommend a crate of crockery and another of glass. The former can be purchased at a very low price, if bought directly from the manufacturer; and on the other the emigrant would be entitled to a drawback to the amount of the duty. A strong Whitechapel cart, with rather high wheels, with spare harness for an outrigger, would be found very serviceable; also a couple of saddles, made by a first-rate London maker, and stuffed rather full behind—this would save

his horses many a sore back. I should not, of course, recommend the bringing out any live stock. If, however, a man have a family, and the ship in which he sails carries no cow, it may be wise for him to bring out a good milch cow, either of the Yorkshire or Durham breed; and, in consideration of her supplying the cuddy with milk, no freight ought to be charged. He would of course have to supply her with fodder. I do not think it wise to bring out a large stock of carpenter's tools, or even ironmongery, beyond some pots, pans, and kettles; for, although things may be purchased at a lower rate when an assortment is bought in London, yet so many things are in this case always taken which are never of the slightest use, that it comes dearer in the long run. If any large tools, such as axes, adzes, &c. are bought, they ought not to be too highly tempered, as where this is the case they fly like glass when used on hard wood. Every family should be provided with a medicine chest, and a simple book of directions for using the medicines. What I have said will be, probably, enough to direct the emigrant as to the principle on which he should act; in details he must be guided by the size of his family, and their ordinary tastes and habits. Also the man of smaller means will be able to pick out hints for his guidance; for the idea of giving detailed directions, which should be applicable to all cases, is as absurd as the idea of an universal medicine.

From what has been before said of the climate of Port Phillip some idea may be formed of the kind of clothing with which it is proper to be provided; and as a

considerable degree of cold as well as great heat is to be guarded against, at different times of the year, it is necessary to have a good stock suited to each purpose. All clothes worn in England are fit for the winter months, and shooting-jackets and trowsers made of light tweed are excellent wear for the morning, during the greater part of the year; a few blouses and linen jackets, and a good supply of white trowsers, would be of great service in the heat of summer. For riding, the trowsers are strapped down the inside of the leg with haragon—this is generally done at Melbourne. Boots, known by the initiated as *bulfinch* boots, are very useful for riding in wet and muddy weather; and something in the shape of a short and loose cloth Taglioni coat, made to reach down to the knee, is indispensable, for carrying strapped to the saddle when travelling. I should recommend a good supply of boots and shoes, as well as the bringing of a man's own lasts, with which his shoemaker can furnish him. Hats and caps suitable to the country can be had at Melbourne, and there is no lack of variety; cloth caps, Panama, Manilla, cabbage-tree, drab Quaker hats, with many others, are in use, for it is in this part of the dress that the colonists chiefly display their taste. I think it is Beranger who says in one of his songs, "J'aime les Anglais quoique leur chapeaux sont si laids," and this applies with tenfold force to the Port Phillippians.

I am rather at a loss how to give advice to ladies on this subject, and they must arrive at their conclusions by a kind of sum in the rule of three. For instance, if they want to ascertain what kind of material is fit

for their summer wear, they may state the problem thus: As a cloth frock-coat is to a linen blouse, so is a silk gown to the required article of clothing, which must of course be rather of a gossamer texture—thin muslin would, I should think, come pretty near. But, above all things, let them be provided with the newest ribbons and the latest fashions, as it gives the ladies in Australia singular satisfaction to know that they are only six months behind the fashions of London and Paris. A lady would find a good stock of boots and shoes of great service,—not only slight ones, but three or four pair of strong cloth boots.

The voyage is a great bugbear to many people, and it certainly is a disagreeable way of spending three or four months—particularly to ladies, who may happen not to be good sailors; it is also, no doubt, attended with an ordinary risk; but neither man nor woman are worth their salt who will not encounter more than this, while they have in view any object worth pursuing; and, without wishing in the slightest degree to cant, I know not how any person can have the slightest reliance on the providence of God Almighty, who does not feel that the waves and tempests are as much the instruments of his power, and equally subject to his control, as the events with which he is more familiar, and that an all-seeing eye and over-ruling Providence is about his path and about his bed, although he take the “wings of the morning, and fly into the uttermost parts of the sea.” I should not have alluded to this subject, but that I know that some women are weak enough to allow their imagination to dwell on shipwreck, with its

attendant horrors, as if this were the ordinary termination of a voyage, and not the rare exception. Nor indeed should I have dwelt on the voyage at all, but that I remember that I was, before leaving home, pestered by people advising me to do quantities of things which appeared to me at the time quite unnecessary—in which view subsequent experience confirmed me. My recommendation to any friend of mine would be :—

First. To sail from London, and in a ship owned in London.

Secondly. To ascertain, if possible, that the owner has the character of supplying his ships liberally.

Thirdly. To see the captain, and try and find out whether he is a quiet man, of good character, or a talking, bouncing, overbearing fellow ; and if this be the case, he should not sail with him on any account. This is a very important point, as much of the comfort of the voyage will depend on the character of the captain.

Fourthly. He should find out the class in which the ship sails, and whether she be a *sloop-built* ship,* or a good, staunch, wholesome craft. An old ship of the latter kind is better than a new one of the former. He need not be so anxious about the rate of sailing, as the fastest ships do not always make the quickest voyages, and are seldom the best sea boats, which is important when ladies are concerned.

* There are certain ports, perfectly well known to every person conversant with maritime affairs, which are notorious for building this kind of ship.

If these points are satisfactory, or nearly so, he should endeavour to get his passage on fair terms, but not screw down too low, as even the best captains, if you do so, will take it out of you in some way or other. I should think that sixty or seventy pounds ought to be a fair price for a single man, in a poop cabin; and that about one hundred and twenty pounds would be enough for a married couple, in the stern cabin: but of course this varies according to the competition, and so will be higher at one time than another. With respect to the mode of living,* I think it would be enough to have an understanding with the captain, that there should be on board the ordinary quantity of live stock, preserved meats, preserved potatoes, wine, and beer, and to let him know that you do not want or care for champagne, or humbug of that kind, but that you expect that a table will be kept fit for a lady to sit down to. I should not recommend asking for any written agreement on the subject; if he be a respectable man, what I have said will be quite enough; and if not, he will not be bound by any agreement, which, practically, it would be almost impossible to enforce. In fact, a passenger is always more or less in the power of the captain; and where a man is so, the most likely way of being ill-treated is to show distrust. The best time for leaving England is from June to November.

* It might be well for a person, having a family, to bring out a box-full of fresh eggs, rubbed over with lard, and stored in salt or melted lard; also a couple of dozen pounds of sago, which, though very cheap, is sometimes neglected by captains of ships; and a little arrow root.

I stated at the beginning of this work that on my arrival at Port Phillip I was much struck by the progress that had even then been made, and I think that I cannot better conclude this account of the district than by briefly recapitulating the marked features which indicate its present state of advancement, at a period of somewhat less than eight years from its first settlement. In the first place, then, we have a population of 20,000 souls, occupying a territory larger than Ireland, for the greater part in perfect peace and security. This population is in possession of upwards of a million and a half of sheep, one hundred thousand cattle, and about five thousand horses, which yield an export of about £300,000 per annum. This may be considered as the income of the population, giving an average of £15 a year for every man, woman, and child. A deduction should, however, be made for interest remitted on British capital invested in the district. This, however, is not large, with the exception of that in possession of the banks. Still, after making this allowance, there are few places where the exports bear so large a proportion to the population; and it is impossible that a country so circumstanced can be, or at least can long remain poor, particularly when it produces itself the chief necessaries of life. A monetary crisis, and consequent depression, may alter the distribution of property, and even for a time cramp its productive power; but as long as the elements of wealth (the power of production, and the industry to make it available) exist in a country, that country must eventually flourish; and to talk of its not possessing capital is, in my mind, a confusion of terms.

The rapid increase in the ordinary revenue may further serve to illustrate this subject. The following is a statement of it:—

AMOUNT OF ORDINARY REVENUE.

	£	s.	d.
1837	2,358	15	10
1838	2,825	17	10
1839	14,703	5	10
1840	36,856	1	6
1841	81,673	10	3
1842	84,568	9	3
1843	73,724	19	10
1844, estimated	83,390	0	0

During the eight years that this country has been occupied, three towns have been built—Melbourne, Geelong, and Portland. In 1841 Melbourne contained about 9,000 inhabitants. This number is supposed to be now reduced to about 8,000, by persons going into the bush. The number of houses amounts to 2,400. There are in this town a Church of England church, a Scotch Church, a Roman Catholic, a Methodist, and an Independent chapel. All the congregations of these, with the exception of the Independents, receive government support, consisting of salaries for the ministers,*

* The grants for salaries of ecclesiastical ministers in the district are as follows:—

3 clergymen, Church of England—one at £200, one £150, one £100	£	450
3 clergymen, Presbyterian—one at £200, one £150, one £100		450
1 clergyman, Wesleyan, at £200		200
2 clergymen, Roman Catholic—one at £200, one £150		350
		<hr/>
		1450
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grants for building places of worship, and aid for schools. There is a supreme court, presided over by a judge, who is appointed permanent resident judge at Port Phillip, but who is created first one of the puisne judges of the supreme court at Sydney, to which in certain cases an appeal lies.* The court-house is a very creditable building. It is in the style of a Gothic house, and is built of fine sand-stone. It would have a good effect were it not overshadowed by the gaol, an ugly oblong building of a dark, dismal coloured stone, well enough for a gaol, but, by its juxtaposition to the court-house, destroying the effect of both. The court-house is situated about a quarter of a mile from the town, already too straggling a place. Had indeed the system of concentration been applied to the town, instead of the country, it would, in my mind, have been better for both.

There is also a Court of Requests for the town of Melbourne and county of Bourke, presided over by a barrister. The jurisdiction of this court extends to causes of action not exceeding £10. The number of cases adjudicated on in 1843 amounted to 3163, involving property to the amount of £15,182. There are four newspapers in this town—one at Geelong, and two

* The bar consists of seven practising members, who are either English or Irish barristers, or Scotch advocates. They cannot, however, practise without being called afresh by the resident judge. The crown prosecutor performs the duty of attorney-general, and also of grand jury. There is a large number of attorneys and solicitors.

at Portland Bay. They have the defects naturally incident to the newspapers of small communities, being much taken up with matters of personal rather than general interest, with frequent attacks on individuals, besides numerous squabbles amongst themselves, and infinite abuse of each other. It is, however, to be hoped, that they will improve as the place advances, or be superseded by others of a higher stamp. I am the more sanguine in this hope, as an excellent example is afforded by the Sydney newspaper press, both as regards ability and moderation. I am myself best acquainted with the Sydney Morning Herald, and can speak as to the temper and talent with which it is conducted; but I believe that the same observations are applicable to the other papers.

There are two banks established at Melbourne—one a branch of the Bank of Australasia, and the other of the Union Bank of Australia. There was another entitled the Port Phillip Bank, which closed last year with loss to the shareholders, but having discharged all its liabilities, and paid a small dividend on each share. There is a mechanics' institute, the building belonging to which is used as a town-hall, and for holding public balls, concerts, &c. There are several hotels, some of which are very well conducted. Some of the others begin very well when first set up, but gradually decline into pot-houses. There are two steam flour-mills, and a foundry for the making and repairing all kinds of machinery. Then there are steamers plying to Sydney, Launceston, and Geelong; also smaller ones, used

either as tugs, or for the conveyance of passengers and goods to and from the shipping and Williamstown.

All these things are evidences of progress which one scarcely expects to find in so new a settlement at the antipodes. It is true, that within the last four years this has not been so rapid, nor its effects so striking, as they were at the foundation of the settlement; but still, upon a retrospect, it is evident that, even in this latter period, we have advanced considerably; and it is by thus looking back that we can best judge of the progress of improvement which, though subject to interruption, still moves forward. At one time, indeed, the effects of injudicious legislation may retard its onward course; mercantile depression may check it; or it may even appear to recede before the more formidable evil of a monetary confusion affecting all classes; but still, when at two periods at all distant from each other we look at the relative positions of the community, we perceive the progress which has been made. So when the tide makes upon the beach, it may seem to make but little progress, appearing at each successive wave to retire as far as it had previously advanced, sometimes even to retreat baffled, leaving behind a bed of ooze and mud; yet still the rising surge rolls on, obedient to the influence of an irresistible, though unseen agency. Thus, too, in the progress of events, though private schemes may fail, and plans of individual aggrandizement be baffled, still the mighty wave of civilization advances; the adventurous settler, the greedy speculator, and the humble labourer, (the puny ripples of this human tide,)

while they each pursue their individual schemes, obeying one common influence, and contributing to one common end, some of them perhaps little dreaming or little caring that they are assisting in carrying out one of the noblest works in which it can fall to the lot of man to be engaged—the enlarging of the bounds of the civilized earth, and the sphere of human enjoyment, by the foundation of a mighty empire.

CHAPTER X.

THE ABORIGINES.

“Is man no more than this? Consider him well.
 Thou owest the worm no silk—the beast no hide—
 The sheep no wool—the cat no perfume,
 Ha! here are three of us sophisticated. Thou are the thing itself.
 Unaccommodated man is no more than such a bare forked animal as thou art.”
 LEARN.

I HAVE hitherto not alluded to the aborigines, as I thought it better to reserve what I had to say of them for an exclusive notice, rather than to mix up the subject with other matter. I shall therefore in this chapter give some details regarding them and their customs, and in the next enter into the more delicate subject of their relations with the white settlers, and the mode of dealing with regard to them, adopted by the government.

There can be but little doubt that the aborigines of Australia are a homogeneous people. The same characteristic appearance pervades the entire race—the same habits and manner of life are every where to be observed, and their several modes of constructing the rude breakwaters or mi-mis in which they live, varies no more than the difference of climate demands: but still further, they are all equally in possession of the same implements of war and of the chase, some of which exhibit such an ingenious application of mechani-

cal force as to make it in the last degree improbable that these could have been the discovery of more than one savage tribe, while the total dissimilarity* in language between the natives of the several districts renders equally unlikely the supposition that these discoveries have been transmitted from one to another. This diversity of language it is which is so anomalous a feature in the case; for, while all the other circumstances which I have enumerated, clearly indicate a common origin,† this alone seems to point in a different

* Captain Grey, the present governor of South Australia, in his narrative of an expedition to North-western Australia, maintains that the languages of the different parts of Australia, if not identical, are mere variations in dialect. This position he supports by reasoning such as the following: Gabby, kuypce, kowin, and kauwee are, it seems, words signifying water in different dialects. Of this Captain Grey says—"But in fact this variation does not constitute any essential difference; for, considering the interchangeable nature of the consonants *b*, *p*, and *w* and of *g* and *k*, which affect different dialects, we shall find the words *gabby*, *kuypce*, *kowin*, and *kauwee* to be only different forms of the same root."—*Grey's Narrative*.

Possibly by a similar process *mobit*, *pareet*, *wonyeraw*, *katyia*, *harteew*, and *pam*, Port Phillip terms signifying water, may be proved identical with each other, and with *gabby*, *kuypce*, *kowin*, and *kauwee*. This reminds me of a passage in Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," where he shows with what ease difficulties of this kind are got over when they stand in the way of a favourite theory. "Thus," says he, "it is proved that the Emperor Ki is certainly the same with King Atoes; for if we only change *k* into *a*, and *l* into *toe*, we shall have the name Atoes; and with equal ease Menes may be proved to be the same with the Emperor Yu."—*Citizen of the World*.

† It is a curious circumstance, when considered in connexion with this subject, that the aborigines of Van Dieman's Land are clearly a distinct race, having woolly hair, while those of New

direction, and the discrepancy can only be reconciled, by supposing a division and dispersion of the original natives to have taken place at a period sufficiently remote, to have given time for these languages to have sprung up subsequently, and that the inventions alluded to having been discovered previous to this event, the knowledge of them had been handed down from father to son to the present generation. The following sketch, then, may be considered as applicable, with very slight differences, to the natives of the entire island.

The aborigines of Australia are in general of slight frame, and rather low stature. They are, however, active and well made. Their faces are, with few exceptions, very ugly; the brow overhanging the forehead villainous low, and also narrow; the nose broad at bottom, and ill-formed; the lips large and fleshy; the mouth wide; teeth large and flat, and the whole character of the face sensual, without being voluptuous. Their colour is a brownish black; their hair is long and straight, yet soft and thick, and most of the men have good beards and moustachoes, which, however the wild tribes near Portland Bay pluck out by the roots. But the quality which does most to redeem this otherwise forbidding picture, is an expression of good-humour and light-heartedness which is very prevalent amongst them.

South Wales have straight hair, without a trace of this character; and that the inhabitants of New Zealand differ completely from both, being copper coloured, and having apparently a dash of Calmuck blood in their composition.

They have also soft sweet voices, and a merry ringing laugh. If the men are ugly, the women are hideous. The slightness of the men seems in them to degenerate into absolute absence of muscle: their hands, arms, feet, and legs being more like the paws and claws of the lower animals than the limbs of Christians (as we used to say in Ireland). The fact is, I believe, that they are not so well fed as the men, getting a smaller share of opossums, rats, grubs, and such small deer: their principal food consists of roots, which they dig up, particularly the *murnong*—a plant with a flower like the dandelion, and with a tuberosc root, also of the gum of the mimosa, which they dissolve in water. Another cause of their miserable appearance is the age at which they become mothers—as early, I believe, as twelve or thirteen years old; and in such cases, the appearance of maternity connected with the infantile expression of these poor creatures' faces, forms a contrast which it is painful to witness. The children are like little pot-bellied cherubims, made of India rubber, and are rather nice-looking little animals: they are very good-humoured, and I never heard but one of them cry while I was in the country.

There is a prevalent idea amongst the settlers that the natives have no canine teeth; but this is a mistake. Amongst the children I have observed the pointed character of the true canine tooth, though as they grow up the point wears away, and, in shape, these then differ but little from the incisor teeth: but, not even in childhood, is the difference marked as it is amongst Euro-

peans.* This is a singular circumstance amongst a nation of canibals, for such they undoubtedly are. On this subject I have made repeated inquiries, and the result has been to establish the fact incontrovertibly.

I have conversed with several persons who have been eye-witnesses of their disgusting feasts, and by one of them† a woman was pointed out, whom, he said, he had seen a few days before eating part of a black child, which had been killed. Indeed I have never heard the fact questioned by any one in the country. The parts which they are said to like best are the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet,‡ and the fat of the kidneys; the latter is, I believe, used for superstitious purposes. When Mr. Moreton was murdered by the natives near Portland Bay, in the year 1841, his body was found stretched out with stakes, and the muscular parts cut off from his arms, and

* I observe the same appearance of the canine teeth in the skull of a New Zealand native which I lately examined, and I recollect seeing the same remark made with respect to the natives of Patagonia in South America.

† This person was Mr. Stevwright assistant protector at Mt. Bouse. The child had been killed under singular circumstances. A native, named Roger, had been apprehended for the murder of a Mr. Codd, and sent to Malbourn. Roger's brother killed this child next day, as a kind of sacrifice—it being a rule with them, when a person comes to a violent end, to take the life of somebody else to soothe the manes of the deceased.

‡ From one of Sir Stamford Raffles' letters it appears that the Battas, a race of cannibals in the Spice Islands, give a similar preference to the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet.

thighs, and the calves of his legs, evidently for the purpose of being eaten. When a woman has several children, they are said to eat all those which are born between the birth of the first and the time that it is able to follow the tribe, that is, until it is four or five years old: the difficulty, if not impossibility, of carrying about more than one child in arms, furnishing a strong *argumentum ab inconveniente* for getting rid of it in some way or other. They seem to think that it does a child no harm to be eaten, they say, "by-and-bye he plenty come again."

Notwithstanding this revolting practice, they seem by no means a ferocious people, but on the contrary, gentle and courteous in their manners, very fond of social intercourse, easily amused, and singularly light-hearted: they have a great taste for mimicry, in which art some of them excel. They are (in common, I believe, with most savages) very indolent and averse to labour, and, as a consequence are great procrastinators; there are no words in the English language which they understand better than by-and-bye. Even in manufacturing their weapons, and implements of the chase, they show but little taste or industry, being in this respect far behind the New Zealanders and South Sea Islanders. The only specimens of their industry which I have seen, besides spears, shields, boomerangs, &c., are some net bands for the hair, a kind of basket, called by them a "biniac,"—both, however, neatly executed,—and cloaks or rugs made of opossum skins stitched together. They are passionately fond of smoking, that great resource of idleness. It has been the remark of

every one conversant with this people that they pay but little regard to glass beads, bright buttons, or any of the toys by which savages in general are caught, and this has been sometimes cited as a proof of superiority of intellect, but I view it in a different light; to me this insensibility only appears to argue a lower social state;—one in which the Australian native, wholly engaged in procuring a mere subsistence, seems sunk in apathy with regard to every thing not conducing to this end. The existence of taste, however rude, indicates the appreciation of the beautiful, and this may be fairly regarded as the measure of the capability of refinement.

They are migratory in their habits, remaining but a few days at a time in any one place. These migrations are however confined within certain limits. In the eastern district they do not build huts of any kind, contenting themselves with a break-weather made of the boughs, or, in wet weather, of the bark, of trees: one



of these they put up in a few minutes, and contrive to make of these simple materials a very comfortable lair. This break-weather, or mi-mi, is about four feet in height, and is in shape something like half a bird's nest inverted;

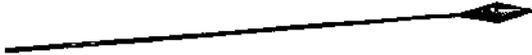
they always erect them so as to have the open to the lee side, where they make a small fire quite close to them. The great secret in making a fire in the bush is to make a small one: new hands generally make one so large that they cannot go near it. It is the habit of the natives to strip themselves when in their mi-mis, in order to expose the surface of their bodies to the full action of the fire. As they never make use of one of these which they have once abandoned, they are in a measure free from the vermin and filth, to which they would be obnoxious had they fixed abodes. In the western and southern districts, however, (towards Port Fairy and Portland Bay,) they construct a kind of hut for the winter season, which is of a more durable character. This they do by heaping sods and clay on the top of the original mi-mi; they add a new piece to it at every shift of wind, so as still to make the entrance from the lee side, and by this means, when they remain in one place for any length of time, these earths reach to a considerable size: I have seen one fully fifteen feet long, and high enough for a man to stand upright in. As it was quite air-tight, and there were about ten or twelve savages squatting round a fire which was on the floor, the heat was intolerable, accompanied by an "ancient and very fishlike smell." Each family has a separate mi-mi and fire—the unmarried men, however, occupying one large one in common: the spears of the men being stuck upright in the ground, close to the fires, give to one of their encampments rather a military effect.

The chief employment of the men is the search for food: opossums, kangaroo rats, and wild cats seem their most common game—the kangaroo and emu are, and I believe always have been, considered rarities. Their mode of hunting the opossum is a sure, but by no means a sporting method. This animal generally lives in a hollow tree; when such a tree is found with an opossum in it, they cut down upon it, (to use a surgical phrase,) and if the operation be not successful, that is, if they do not take the animal at once, they light a fire at the bottom of the tree, the hollow of which acts like a funnel in drawing the flame, this makes the animal bolt, when it becomes an easy prey. Upon these occasions they have to climb the trees, which they do in a most surprising manner, merely cutting notches about an inch deep, to support the ball of the foot and give a slight hold with the hand: they cut the notch above them as they ascend, and use it first as a hold, and then as a step. In this manner, with great rapidity, they run up trees, the stems of which are perfectly smooth, and without branches for seventy or eighty feet from the ground. In this species of *chasse* the sagacity of the hunter is displayed chiefly in discovering his game, which he does by the tracks of the little animal running up and down the tree, and which are scarcely observable except to experienced eyes; but they can tell you whether these tracks are perfectly fresh, a few hours, or a day, or more, old. They are great adepts at tracking animals of all kinds, and in this way are often of great service to the settlers in recovering lost flocks of sheep. When in pursuit of the larger game, such as kangaroo

and emu, they sometimes try to creep up to them ; on these occasions they carry a bough, which they hold in front ; they advance when the animal is not looking at them, and remain perfectly motionless when he is. In this way they get close enough to throw their spears, although the kangaroo is one of the most timid and watchful creatures in the world. At other times, when the tribe is mustered in large force, or strengthened by the junction of others, they have a grand hunting match ; they then surround the animals, much after the fashion described by Sir Walter Scott in *Waverley*, and throw their spears at them when attempting to escape. However their most common mode of hunting kangaroo and emu is with dogs. They had domesticated the dog* when the country was first discovered, and now that they have crossed the breed with the kangaroo dog, many of them are in possession of animals quite fit for the work : the kangaroo dog himself is a greyhound with a dash of the mastiff, to give him weight, size, and courage. Some few of them have muskets, but this, until lately, was contrary to law. Near Portland Bay the natives make use of a long, slight stick, with a noose at the end, with which they snare birds of all kinds, even the wild turkey, which they creep up to in the manner described above. The game, when obtained, they roast whole in the fire, and pull it in pieces when sufficiently cooked.

* They have different words in their language to express the wild dog and the tame dog. The former being called, in the Barrabul language, "Durwall," and the latter "Kaal."

The boomerang and throwing stick have not only been so frequently described, but so often exhibited in the United Kingdom, that it would be superfluous to give a description of either. It is a mistake to suppose that the boomerang is not used in war. The wiwi is an instrument not so well known. It is composed of a slight straight withy, about two feet long, to which is attached a head, made of a piece of wood four inches long, in the shape of two cones joined together at the base, something in this form—

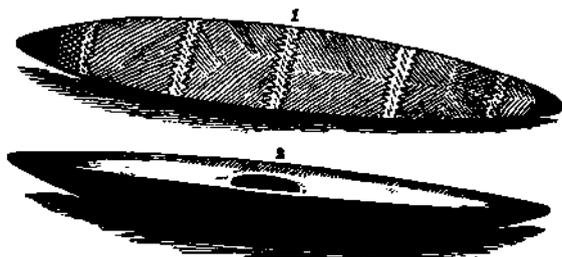


This they strike against the ground, at a little distance to one side of them, whence it rises at right angles to its first direction, and flies with the swiftness of an arrow for about one hundred yards, and at a height of about ten feet from the ground.

The liangle is, I think, described by Sir Thomas Mitchell. It is of the shape of a pickaxe, with only one pick. Its name is derived from another native word, *liang*, signifying a tooth. It is a very formidable weapon, and used only in war.



Their shields have, I think, also been described by Mitchell. They are about five inches broad, and two feet six long. They are generally rudely carved, and painted with white and red ochre.



Towards the Goulburn river, the natives have an instrument, which I have never seen, but which, as well as the use to which it is put, has been described to me, by a person on whose accuracy I have the fullest dependence. It is a flat piece of wood with a strong leather thong running through two holes in it. This thong has a sharp pointed piece of wood of about six inches long attached. This instrument is used for private assassination. Whenever, according to their notions, (as I shall explain presently) a life is required, and a victim is not easily procured, one of the natives sets off, provided with an instrument of this kind. He presents himself at the encampment of some friendly tribe as a visitor, and remains for the night, during which he watches an opportunity of affecting his purpose of assassination. This he does by tightening the noose round the windpipe of his victim, so as to prevent

his uttering a cry, while at the same time he stabs him above the breast bone with the pointed stick. He then removes the body to some distance, takes out the kidney fat, and returns in triumph. There is something in this, very like what we hear of the Thugs in India.

The natives are passionately fond of their *corrobarees*, or dances; and it is here that they are seen to the greatest advantage. When thus engaged, they paint themselves fantastically with pipe-clay. Each man paints himself to suit his fancy; the only uniformity which they observe, being in the lines on the legs and on the face. When a number of them are seen together by firelight, the effect is much that of military uniforms, and this resemblance is heightened by their wearing round the waist a belt of some bright colour, the ends of which hang down before and behind. But the strangest addition to their costume are the bushes which they tie round their ancles, and which are supposed, by their rustling, to heighten the effect of the performance. When preparing for the dance, they put a piece of pipe-clay into their mouths, which they chew, and then mark themselves with the forefinger. I have been amused watching the seriousness with which they perform this operation: no young lady dressing for a ball could take more pains. Their movement in the dance is a very singular one. The action is entirely in the thigh, which, by a strong muscular exertion, they move backwards and forwards without stirring the foot, further than that it partakes of a lateral movement which is given to the whole body. This motion of the thighs is in strict time with the musical accompaniment,

which consists of a kind of recitation, sometimes sung by one, and sometimes by a number, headed by a regular leader. The dancers hold in their hands each a waddy and a shield, or, in default of these, two small pieces of wood, which they strike together during some parts of the performance; while at others they make a whizzing noise with their mouths; both of them being in time to the music. The women and children meantime sit in a circle at some distance, and mark the measure by striking with one hand on a piece of kangaroo skin rolled very tight, which they hold in the other, and which serves as a kind of drum. The figure of the dance is irregular; one man at first begins by himself, then another joins him, until the whole become engaged. As they join the dance, they dispose themselves in lines, each man in the rear rank imitating exactly the movements of the man in the rank before him, or as soldiers say, of his "covering file." After some time they advance, with the chanter at their head, towards the place where the women are sitting; the time of the music now increases in rapidity, and the performers become more violent in their gestures, accompanying the song with a stamping of the feet, until the whole thing ends with a spirited musical crash.

When I first witnessed one of these corroborees, I was greatly struck with the beauty and the wildness of the scene. The mild rays of the moon shining on the dewy grass, the red glare of the fire in parts illuminating the stems and foliage of the trees, but rendering the intervals of shadow deeper and more gloomy from

the contrast, the painted figures of the natives, now brought into strong relief, now lost in the gloom of the forest, their uncouth gestures, and the wild and melancholy but not unpleasing cadence of their simple chant, combined to produce an effect which more ambitious displays often fail to realize. I was brought down from the train of reflections naturally suggested by a scene at once so novel and so wild, by the observation of one of our men, who exclaimed in the spirit of Trinculo, "Why then, a man would make a power of money, if he had them fellows at home for a show."

In the end of 1843, or beginning of 1844, a new corrobaree was introduced amongst the natives, about which they were perfectly wild, spending not only the nights, but a great part of the day, in practising it; in fact, the enthusiasm which it caused, could only be equalled by that excited by the Polka in England about the same time.

These corrobarees are held (generally by moonlight) upon different occasions, such as, when going to war, or at the initiation of the young men of the tribe. They are also, I am informed, held for the solace of the spirits of the dead, in the same way that in more civilized countries masses are said for their souls; on these occasions, a large piece of bark is said to be made use of, on which are placed lines corresponding with the number of the dead; when so many steps have been gone through, one soul is checked off, and so on until all of them are disposed of. In the war corrobarees the women are said to join, and are described as rushing about and screaming like so many furies. The corro-

baree has been found in vogue amongst the Australian aborigines wherever they have been discovered, as well on the East coast as at Swan River, thus affording a fresh proof, if any were wanting, to confirm the fact of unity of origin.

I was once, by chance, present at a fight between two tribes, and a description of it may probably prove interesting to some readers: It was caused by a man of one of the tribes carrying off a woman belonging to the other; there were about twenty men engaged on each side; they did not come to close quarters, but stood in two open lines with intervals between each man of about thirty feet; the two lines were distant from each other about sixty yards at the centre, but drawn in at the wings, so as each to form a slight curve; none of the men engaged, shifted their position from the place first taken up. They seemed to be pitted each against an antagonist in the opposite line, whom they kept constantly watching, at the same time poising a spear, and drawing up alternately one leg and then the other, as if for the purpose of rendering them supple, or else going through the pantomimic representation of avoiding a spear. While this was going on, they from time to time, harangued each other, much in the style of Homer's heroes. Occasionally one, as if moved by some sudden impulse, but in reality I suppose, seeing the eye of his antagonist removed from him, would either throw a boomerang or launch a spear. The boomerang, when used in war, is generally thrown so as to take the ground a few yards in front of the person at whom it is aimed, and is intended to wound him as it rises from the earth,

by touching which, its rotatory motion is accelerated; if it miss its object it comes back to the person by whom it was thrown. In the hands of these savages it is a very formidable weapon. Behind one of the lines of combatants stood a woman, a hideous creature, and rather old, whom I understood to be the *teterrima causa belli*; if so, the ravisher must have been one of those frantic lovers who see "Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt." This dame seemed excited to the greatest pitch of fury; she held in her hand a stick about four feet long—one of those used for grubbing up murnonga—with this she struck the ground, at the same time bending her body with the most violent contortions, or else brandished it in the air with the wildest gestures, to give force to a torrent of eloquence, something between a chaunt and a harangue, which she screamed forth until she foamed at the mouth; her dishevelled hair streaming in the wind, her fur cloak flying about with the violence of her motion, her thin, skinny arms tossed about with the wildest fury, her unearthly screaming and violent gesticulations, exciting the idea of a demoniac fury more than of anything human; indeed, she would have done admirably for one of the devils who appear in the last scene of Don Giovanni. I witnessed this scene for about three quarters of an hour, and was then forced to go on. Returning in the evening, I inquired the result from an old black friend of mine, named Jack Mungit, who told me that two men had been speared, one through the calf of the leg, and another through the thigh, and that a third had had his cheek cut open with a boomerang; he seemed rather ashamed of having been engaged in so

foolish a business, but the women seemed delighted with the row. I was not, however, able satisfactorily to ascertain whether this was a regular fight, or one of their judicial combats. On the one hand, they did not make use of the liangle, their most deadly weapon; this does not look like the former, but on the other, there were three men wounded, which is not in accordance with one's idea of the latter, unless one would suppose it to have been a kind of general gaol delivery.

The mode in which communication is carried on between the natives and the settlers, is by a kind of *lingua franca*, composed partly of Sydney and Melbourne native words, partly of thieves' cant, and partly of English words peculiarly applied, the word "plenty" performing a conspicuous part in the colloquy. The following is a specimen of such eloquence:—"You pilmillally jum-buck, plenty sulky me, plenty boom, borack gammon," which being interpreted, means—"If you steal my sheep I shall be very angry, and will shoot you and no mistake."* In the language spoken by the tribes of Melbourne, Corio, Weirabee and Barrabul, there is no such sound as that of the letter S, and their attempts to pronounce English words involving that sound, are very laughable. Their numerals do not extend, properly speaking, beyond three; four being expressed by a repetition of the word which signifies two, and all beyond that is expressed by the word "orar," which means a great number.

* This scarcely comes up to the force or beauty of the *plenty boom*.

To a casual observer these people might seem to be under no sort of government, nor subject to control of any kind, no deference being paid to age, nor any restraint imposed upon youth, so that there might appear to be an absence of the elements, from which we are accustomed to derive the very idea of civil government. The only obvious exercise of authority is that of the husband over his wife, but even this is in general mildly exercised; they have seldom more than two wives. The wife, or *lubra*, has her part assigned in the domestic economy; it is her business to make the *mi-mi*, to light the fire, to draw water, and to dress the game which her husband has procured. When moving from place to place it is she who carries the basket, the kettle, and whatever other utensils foreign intercourse has introduced into their *cuisine*. But we should be in error were we to infer from these appearances, that their actions were unshackled, and their conduct subject to no control; this is far from being the case, they are in fact subject to a set of most debasing superstitions, consisting either of customs handed down to them by their ancestors, or supposed to be sanctioned by revelations of a supernatural character. As their sorcerers, priests, or *koragees* (as they are called) are the interpreters of these customary laws, and the supposed recipients of these supernatural communications, they, of course, exercise extensive influence so long as they do not violate the popular prejudices. These customs (as I believe) regulate not only their graver concerns, their funerals, marriages, *corrobarees*, &c., but their ordinary migrations, and the affairs of every day life, thus forming a

code which interferes most materially with their liberty of action; and as they lay claim to a higher than mere human origin, so they reject all appeal to reason, and however childish or absurd they may appear, or however cruel or revolting may be the practices which they sanction, they triumph over all the objections which may be raised by common sense. It is in fact the history of priestcraft all over the world. Some idea of the absurdity of these customs may be formed from the mode of procedure upon the death of a native, whether occurring from disease or accident. The following account is from the evidence of a Mr. Thomas, an assistant protector, on a trial at Melbourne, and is taken *verbatim* from the newspaper report:—

“The natives cannot account for death, unless they see the stroke. When any relation dies they are very sulky, and mourn till they get the fat of the kidneys of some other black. When an aboriginal dies, they place the body on the ground, and dig a trench round it, and when they find within the trench the largest hole of an insect,* they consider the first man they find in that direction as the cause of the deceased's death. They also take the depth of the hole, and at a corresponding distance place the party accused, for punishment—that is, for the family of the dead person to throw spears at him. They have a service on the body if a male, but not in the case of a female; it is to inform, as they suppose, the deceased of their intention to revenge his death.”

It appears from Captain Grey's narrative that a similar idea (as to there being no such thing as natural death) prevails among the natives of Western Australia,

* The ground is very frequently perforated with holes, in which are deposited the larvæ of insects.

but he does not specify the means which they use to ascertain who is the murderer, which, he says, are various, and probably as effectual as that which Mr. Thomas describes. Captain Grey also describes the custom of throwing spears at the culprit.

The religious belief of the aborigines seems to be confined to very few articles of faith, amongst which the most important are the belief in a powerful malevolent spirit, in the existence of the soul after death, and its occasional re-appearance in a visible form—in short, a belief in ghosts, called by them *meering*; their belief in the supernatural powers of their priests, or *koragees*. They have also a strange idea that white men are black men raised from the dead. Whether this notion (which appears to be also prevalent in Western Australia) arose from its being the only way in which they could account for the appearance amongst them of a race differing so widely from their own; or whether it is a misconception of the doctrine of the resurrection, taught to some of them by the missionaries, is more than I can say. One lad, of the name of Rimmull, told me that he had been taught by the missionaries, that if “black fellow did good to white fellow, when he died he should plenty jump up white fellow with God.”

Such is the imperfect information which, from time to time, I have been able to glean with respect to the aborigines of this country; but I wish it to be remembered that the difficulty which Europeans find in obtaining true information, with regard to the customs of savage tribes, is augmented four-fold when they attempt to obtain any explanation of these customs, or any

account of their speculative opinions; for as a knowledge of these subjects can only be obtained by means of a language but little understood, the truth is apt to be distorted—like a ray of light passing through an imperfect medium; and as it is not my desire to mislead, I wish what I have said to be received with this allowance. The subject itself is one full of interest, as exhibiting to us not merely a picture of life in its simplest state, and society under its rudest form, but opening a retrospect through which, as through a vista, one may see in shadowy perspective a succession of countless generations, varying but little in habits or customs from the time of the first great dispersion of mankind. Many persons who entertain overwrought ideas of the evils of civilization, and who feel a lurking attachment for the state “when wild in woods the noble savage ran,” may feel disappointed at the by no means flattering picture which I have drawn of this mode of life, as presented by the Australian savage. It may appear a paradox, but in my opinion a state of nature (as it is called) is not the state natural to man. Perfection in his physical, far less in his social attributes, is not to be attained without the control of reason, and the exercise of self-denial. True it is that a low state of civilization, such as existed among the ancient Germans, and the modern North American Indians, is highly favourable to the development of the former: self-control and restraint were however the leading characteristics of their education. But wherever we examine the social position of man, either in a low state of civilization, or in that of absolute barbarism, we find his actions

cramped by absurd customs, and his mind tyrannized over by degrading superstitions. To combine the highest degree of liberty of thought and action with the greatest security of property, and the most complete protection from violence, is a problem towards the solution of which, the most civilized nations have made the nearest approximation, but which will never, in all probability be perfectly solved.

CHAPTER XI.

MODE OF DEALING WITH THE ABORIGINES—THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE WHITE SETTLERS—LAMENTABLE WANT OF SUCCESS OF THE MISSIONS, AND PROTECTORATE—EXTRACT FROM LORD STANLEY'S DESPATCH ON THIS SUBJECT.

“ To civilize the rude unpolished world,
 And lay it under the restraint of laws;
 To make man wild and sociable to man;
 To cultivate the wild licentious savage,
 With wisdom, discipline, and liberal arts,
 Th' embellishments of life ;—virtues like these
 Make human nature shine, reform the soul,
 And break our Sævas barbarians into man.”

ADDISON'S CATO.

IN considering the proper mode of dealing with the aborigines of Australia, it is desirable that all extraneous difficulty should be got rid of. Many persons when arguing on this subject turn round and say, “Well, after all, I do not see what right we have to come and take away their country from them.” This is a mixing up of two questions, which should be kept perfectly distinct. And it is of importance that the right to colonize should be settled in the first instance; for if we have no right to occupy the country, no course of subsequent dealing can, in the forum of conscience, cure the original defect of title; and the sooner that we retrace our steps, and that every European departs from the shores of Australia, the sooner shall we have shown a sincere regret for the injury we have already caused to the natives.

The proposition to be discussed is this : Whether the fact of a small population of savages, wandering over an immense tract of country in pursuit of game, or for the purpose of procuring subsistence in some such way, gives them such an indefeasible right to that territory, that no other nation has a right to trench upon its boundaries. This is I think stating the question fairly ; for if you encroach never so little, for the purpose of introducing agricultural or pastoral pursuits, the tendency is to diminish *pro tanto* the means of subsistence of the savage. It is also against all experience to suppose that the occupation of a savage country by civilized man can take place without injury to its aboriginal inhabitants. The conflict of right therefore begins the moment that the white man sets his foot upon its shore, and the question comes to this : which has the better right—the savage, born in a country, which he runs over, but can be scarcely said to occupy, the representative of a race, which for ages have left unimproved the splendid domains spread out before them, as if to tempt their industry, but of which they may be deemed to have refused the possession ; or, the civilized man, who comes to introduce into this unimproved and, hitherto, unproductive country, the industry which supports life, and the arts which adorn it, who will render it capable of maintaining millions of human beings more nearly in that position, which it was intended that man should hold in the scale of creation ? I conceive that the original right, whatever it may have been, which the savage possessed, that right, by his *laches*, he has forfeited. The commission to “ go forth and replenish

the earth, and possess it," implies something more than the mere obtaining a precarious subsistence from the casual bounty of nature; the thorn and the briar were to be rooted up, and the herb yielding food to be planted in its place; all noxious animals to be subdued, and those intended to minister to the wants of man reduced into proper subjection. These duties the savage has for centuries neglected, and thus, in my mind, abandoned his inheritance. Can it be for a moment supposed that a large portion of the globe—yielding to few in its means of production, to none in the amenity of its climate—could have been intended by its Creator to be reserved for ever as the hunting grounds of a handful of savages? As well might it be said that it should be left to the kangaroo and wild dog, "the native burghers of this desert city;" and indeed the whole argument smacks of the sickly philosophy of Jacques, "who swears in this sort we do more usurp, than doth our brother who hath banished us." Whatever opinion enthusiasts may form, that which I advocate is the one which the common sense of mankind will support, and the law of nature prompt them to act upon to the end of time, as they have done since the dawn of civilization. In any case it lies not in the mouth of those who are actually occupying the country, or of those who have sanctioned that occupation, at this period to question its propriety; few do so openly, but there is an uneasiness in dealing with the subject, which shows in many a consciousness that in their opinion our title is bad. This is one reason why I have thought it right to meet this question on its own ground, but there is

another and more important one ; for the decision of this point has an important bearing upon the practical question of, how the natives are to be dealt with, as it materially affects their relations towards us. If the white man had a right to occupy the country, the native, by opposing no vain resistance to his doing so, acquires no fresh rights ; and the indulgence which he is entitled to, at the hands of the civilized man, is that of an ignorant, and therefore weak being, from one superior to him in knowledge and power, and not as an equivalent for any property that he has given up, or any rights that he has surrendered.

But although I do not admit that the native can claim compensation as a right, I fully concur in the view that the providing for his welfare, as far as possible, is a charge which the English government was bound to undertake, as it has done, and that it is also bound to afford him all the indulgence which is consistent with the welfare of its other subjects. It is no doubt its duty to endeavour, by systematic efforts, to make him, as far as he is capable, a partaker in the blessings of civilization, more particularly by attempts to educate the young, and to mitigate the evils necessarily attendant on the period of transition, by putting out of his power, as much as possible, the indulgence in vice and intemperance. From this duty they have shown no disposition to shrink, and I have only to lament that, hitherto, success has not attended their benevolent efforts. To this subject I shall return. It is moreover the duty of the legislature—regarding the spirit, rather than the letter, of the English law, and bearing in mind

that they are dealing with a state of society not analogous to any thing within the range of their former experience—to frame such a code of laws as may at once afford protection to the native, and security to the settler. And it should never be forgotten, that it is, in practice, impossible to succeed in accomplishing the one, without making provision for the other. To hold the balance even between the two, is, however, by no means an easy task ; and our rulers have eluded the difficulty : “ Declare them,” say they, “ in the fullest sense of the words, British subjects ; give them the rights of British citizens, and the protection of British law.” But, before doing this, they should have reflected, that the laws which are well suited to a civilized people, living in fixed abodes, may be totally inapplicable to hordes of wandering savages ; nor is the matter mended, but rather the contrary, by the circumstance, that the range of their wanderings is amongst the dwellings of a civilized but scattered community, whose laws and language they are ignorant of, and whose lives and properties are, in a great measure at their mercy. They should have remembered too, that subject and sovereign are correlative terms ; that protection and submission are reciprocal duties ; that a declaration of this kind, instead of good citizens, may create a parcel of insubordinate rebels. And they should have considered what were their means of carrying the law into effect, in case their new subjects did not consider themselves bound by it. To give men the protection of laws, which they do not acknowledge, and the sanctions of which it is impossible to enforce, is a one-sided arrangement, which is likely to press

heavily on the other subjects of the empire brought in contact with them. It will now be my business to show how this has worked in practice.

There is no principle which more honourably distinguishes the common law of England, than the humane caution with which it abstains, in almost all cases, from allowing an individual to take the law into his own hands to the extent of depriving another of life; self-defence, including the defence of a man's house and family, being the only plea, which, in the eye of the law, can justify homicide by a private individual; if, for instance, you see a murderer making his escape, a thief riding away with your horse, or driving away your cattle, you may, indeed, arrest him if you can, but if you fire at him and kill him you will be guilty of murder or manslaughter at least. This extreme strictness would no doubt have afforded protection to a great number of malefactors, had not means been taken to counteract this effect. In the simple times of our Saxon ancestors, whilst travelling was unfrequent, and the mode of transit difficult, it was esteemed a sufficient protection to society, that every Englishman should have a fixed habitation where he could be found, and made responsible for his acts, or in his default, that a certain member of the community should be answerable for him, and make reparation for his crime. Hence arose the vagrant laws, which have in modern times been frequently, and with justice, censured as cruel and oppressive, because inapplicable, but which were essential to complete the system of Saxon police, and to act, in a measure, as a counterpoise to the encouragement given to crime, by the protection afforded to the person of the offender though

surprised in the fact. When, however, the increase of population, and the growth of commerce and manufactures, had rendered frequent travelling necessary, and the improvements of modern invention had made it easy, and it was found that the vagrant laws had become inapplicable to our complicated social system, and totally ineffectual as a measure of police, a new check was adopted, and a numerous police force organized, as well for the prevention, as for the detection of crime.

But when, without any of the safeguards which made it tolerable in England, this principle comes to be acted on, with regard to the black population in New South Wales, it operates as a complete protection to them in all their aggressions on the settlers. We will suppose that a hut has been robbed by the natives, the hut-keeper and shepherd surprised, and either killed or wounded, and a flock of sheep carried off. The settler arms some of his other servants, and pursues them immediately. They come up with them, and recover such of the sheep as have not been killed. The natives are of course anxious to escape, and to wait for some other opportunity of effecting their purpose; for it forms no part of the tactics of savages, when they have a chance of escape, to stand up in fair fight, unless they have an overwhelming force. If, under these circumstances, the settler and his servants fire upon and kill any of them, they make themselves amenable to a law, by which they may be hung or transported for life. If, on the contrary, they abstain from this course, in compliance with the English law, and relying on the protection which the government is bound to afford them, the result is, that in the first place, the natives get clean off; the

capture of one of them, except by surprise, or when completely surrounded, being almost impossible, even if men were willing to run the risk of being speared or tomahawked in making the attempt. In the second place, as I shall show presently, there is not the slightest chance of the law being vindicated, by the subsequent apprehension and punishment of the offenders; the consequence is that, emboldened by impunity, they probably return soon after, and commit some further outrages upon the settler.

The government profess to extend to the natives that protection which an Englishman receives from the laws, but in fact afford him a complete license to rob and murder. The Englishman, in return for the security which he affords to society by a fixed residence, the possession of property, and the ties of kindred, is treated with a tenderness with respect to his person, even in his case scarcely reconcilable with good order. And the native, without any of these guarantees, without recognizing, or indeed knowing anything about our laws, without a fixed dwelling, without property of any kind, leading a vagrant life amongst a people of his own, amongst whom the similarity of natural physiognomy makes it difficult to recognise him; inaccessible to the visits of the police, even if there were an efficient force of the kind in the country, though he may be surprised (as the French jurists say) *en plein delit*, is treated with a similar indulgence, amounting in his case to a complete immunity from punishment. The English law is a connected system, which to be effectual must be enforced throughout; it is not sufficient to carry into effect

one part, leaving out some other part which was intended to act as a counterpoise and check. If it be determined that the native should, in this respect, be put on the same footing with other subjects, let him be forced to give to society the same security for his good behaviour by a fixed residence, or, if this be impossible, let the law itself be modified, so as to prevent its being a screen to protect robbery and murder.

During the first few years after the settlement of this district, the settlers acted on the broad principle of the law of nature, intelligible alike to savage and to sage. When they saw men marshalled under their leaders, with deadly weapons in their hands, driving off a spoil, after perhaps having killed some of their comrades, they treated the marauders as enemies, and used their weapons, sometimes with deadly effect; these collisions, however, rarely occurred; intimidated by the bold bearing and superior weapons of the settlers, the natives gave them but little molestation, and in all parts of the country, settled at that time, live with them to this day on the most friendly terms, coming to, and leaving their stations at their pleasure, frequently bringing skins and furs, and receiving flour and sugar in exchange, occasionally employed for a few days together, and on all occasions treated with the greatest indulgence.* But

* It is only in the more recently settled parts of the district that the natives are troublesome to the settlers. These include part of the Port Fairy District, thence north and west to the Glenelg, the Grange, and the Wannon, the country to the west and north of that near the Victoria range, also about the Grampians, and on some parts of the Goulburn. In other parts nobody dreams of fastening his hut door night or day.

when it was intimated to the settlers, by the government, that the natives were, in every respect, to be treated as British subjects, and that any person would be severely dealt with, who in his conduct towards them in any wise infringed the laws of England, the case became very different. Cases, such as I have described, became common, and the natives, encouraged by impunity, have succeeded in destroying an immense quantity of the property, and sacrificing the lives of many of the settlers and their servants. Exasperated by these repeated attacks, and by the want of protection by the Government, the latter have, I regret to say, been led to take the law into their own hands, and some of them I have no doubt, have been guilty of savage murders. The consequence has been mutual distrust, the natives are driven off the stations, and not allowed to approach the huts; if they see a white man they skulk into the bushes, and it is not till emboldened by superior numbers, or tempted by an opportunity to surprise, that they make their appearance for the purpose of some hostile act. I give to the executive the fullest credit for their anxiety to bring to justice, any of the natives who can be taken, and against whom satisfactory proof can be procured; but I think that I have shown enough to prove the difficulty of doing this. But supposing this difficulty overcome, suppose the savages arrested, and ready to be put upon his trial, an insuperable barrier has yet to be surmounted before this can take place. By the law of England no British subject can be put upon his trial, who is not of sufficient mental capacity to comprehend the proceedings of the court, and to exercise

his right of challenge; when, therefore, a native is brought to the bar, a jury is empannelled to try an issue in the foregoing terms, and the verdict in every case (I think) but one has been in the negative. On what grounds a distinction was made in this case I had not the means of ascertaining.*

* The following is a list of such of the black population as have been brought before the Supreme Court since its foundation, with the charges against them. I have not been able to obtain a return of the murders and robberies committed by the aborigines, which is wanted in order to render the other of much value, they have, however, been very numerous :—

Year.	Murder.	Robbery.	Inciting to violence.	Not Guilty.	Guilty.	OBSERVATIONS.
1841	3			7	2	Executed (Natives of V. D. Land.) Aboriginal native, executed for the murder of Mr. Codd, in 1839 or 1840.
1842	4	1		4	1	
1843		2	1	3		
Total.	13	3	1	14	3	

In this return those set down as Not Guilty, were in reality not put upon their trial, being found on the preliminary enquiry, not of sufficient capacity to understand legal proceedings, &c.

The two men executed in 1841 were natives of Van Dieman's Land, and had been brought over by Mr. Robinson, Chief Protector of aborigines, and were supposed to be partly civilized, having been resident in his family several years; but they broke out one day, took to the bush with their arms and shot an American sailor whom they met by accident. The natives when brought before the Court, have the benefit of legal assistance, one of the most eminent counsel at the Port Phillip bar having, very properly, been appointed their standing counsel. He is paid by the crown.

No effectual protection, therefore, being afforded to the settlers, as far as the natives are concerned, the feeling of many of them is this, that the government, by its being so inadequate to the discharge of those duties for which all governments exist, namely, the protection of life and property, has, in fact, abdicated its office, and forfeited their allegiance; and they feel quite at liberty to take the law into their own hands, and to protect themselves, absolved from all moral restraint on its part—the only question being one of prudence, whether they are likely by such conduct to run the risk of detection and punishment. Others there are of higher principles and more enlarged views, who prefer incurring all risks to violating the laws, but who hope, when the true state of the case is laid before the home government, that some attempt may be made to remedy the present anomalous state of things. But amongst all there is but one feeling of dissatisfaction, that no efficient police force has been established, to protect them in that course of forbearance so rigidly insisted on.

But whether the present system be right or wrong in theory, it is one which in practice *is not*, and cannot be carried out; and if I had no other objection to it, this would, in my mind, be a sufficient one, that the whole thing is a delusion from beginning to end. It may serve to set the minds of people in England at rest on the subject; but that is all it does. The English law has no more effect in restraining the natives from the commission of outrages on the settlers, by any fear of its sanctions, or any respect for its authority, than has

the law of Confucius, of which they know about as much; nor has it much more in protecting them from retaliation, should the latter be unscrupulous enough to resort to it. It is in its present unmodified state practically inefficient to restrain aggressions on one side or the other. Even the very officers in command of the small police force which exists, must either allow the escape of persons guilty of the greatest crimes, or else, in order to punish them, violate that law which they are bound to administer; and the colonial government have to wink at that violation. As an example of this, I shall detail an occurrence, an account of which I had on the best authority, and of which I understand a report was sent to government at the time.

In the winter of 1843 the natives carried off a child, the daughter of a Mr. Abraham Ward, an inn keeper, living about fifty miles from Portland Bay. Ward, when it was missed, went out in search of it in company with some friends. After a search of something better than a day, they succeeded in coming up with one or two natives, one of whom told them that the child had been killed by a man of a neighbouring tribe. He described the child's having been carried off, its having been given in charge to one of the women, and that on its crying, this man whom he spoke of had killed it with his waddy, and showed how the women had buried it with their murnong sticks. This man also promised to bring the party to the place where this tribe were. Ward having represented these facts to the officer in command of the native police, a party

consisting of that officer and four native troopers, together with Ward, and three other Europeans, went out to endeavour to find the grave of the child, and, if possible, to take prisoners the natives concerned in its abduction and murder. After proceeding for some time they found a lamb which had been but lately ripped from the womb of a ewe, which led them to the conclusion that sheep had been recently taken and destroyed by the natives. At a short distance further on they came upon a party of four native men, whom they attempted to secure. Three of them, however, got away by plunging into a thick tea-tree scrub which was near; the fourth took to an open swamp, pursued by a settler. After running for some time, with his spear shipped in his throwing-stick, this native availed himself of the opportunity of his pursuer's taking his eye off him (owing to a false step) to throw his spear, which narrowly missed taking effect, owing to a sufficient allowance not having been made for the alteration of pace consequent on the stumble. The settler then fired, and wounded the native in the hip with a ball—not so, however, as to disable him; for, upon the white man's attempting to close with him, he seized another spear, which he had dropped when he was wounded, and shipped it for throwing, when the other fired his second barrel, and shot him dead. In the basket which this native had with him was found, amongst other things, part of a very peculiar coat, made of lambskin, which a poor man of the name of Basset was in the habit of wearing. This Basset was an old shepherd, who, being a provident man, had saved a great

part of his wages, and had recently sat down in the neighbourhood with about a thousand sheep in charge of himself and another man. They concluded, from this that he had been murdered, and his sheep taken. On proceeding a little further, at the other side of a rising ground, the attention of the party was attracted by seeing a number of crows and eagle hawks hovering over something, which, upon making a reconnoissance, they found to be the carcasses of sheep, upon which a large party of natives had just been regaling themselves : this party were close at hand. It was resolved to attack them ; and the officer divided his force into two parts, of which one, consisting of three native troopers, was to creep up in front, to fire, and then make a rush upon the natives ; while the other party, consisting of the officer and the four settlers, under the guidance of the fourth trooper, were to creep round and intercept their flight. The three troopers being rather dilatory in making their attack, the order of things was changed, and the European party commenced the attack by firing on the natives, and then rushing on. The party attacked fled in all directions, some of them coming under the fire of the three black troopers originally detached. The result was, that nine natives were left dead upon the spot, all of whom were men. The party now proceeded to the hut of the old man Basset, whom, as they had anticipated, they found murdered, his body much mutilated, and his sheep driven off.

When we analyze this case, what does it amount to ? Two barbarous and unprovoked murders are committed, besides a wholesale robbery of sheep ; and the persons

engaged in the commission of these crimes are punished promptly and effectually, in a mode intelligible to their whole tribe, and a lesson—a severe one certainly—given to the natives, which has had the very best effect in preserving the peace of the district ever since—but which probably would not have been necessary, had not frequent impunity encouraged them to the commission of these outrages. There can be no reasonable doubt that the persons shot were engaged in the robbery and murder of the old man Basset, their being in possession of his sheep and clothes, affording the strongest evidence of those facts, for the party first come up with were merely a look-out detached from the main body. The proof of their having been engaged in the abduction and murder of the child rests merely on native evidence. This, however, merely affects the moral view of the proceeding, for in a legal one it could not be justified, even if the European party had seen them commit both murders. It was indubitably the duty of the police officer to have attempted to arrest the natives, although aware that, in making the attempt, he must have afforded them almost a certainty of making their escape, and also have exposed the lives of his men; and although he knew that, even if successful in effecting a capture, it would only result in the farce of the prisoners being brought up to the bar of the supreme court, and declared by a jury not of sufficient capacity to understand the proceedings, or to exercise their right of challenge. This was, however, no affair of his; it was his business to attempt to execute the

laws, and not to act on abstract notions of right or wrong.

This is not written for the purpose of injuring that officer, who has, I have no doubt, been led into the commission of legal crime by an over anxiety to do substantial justice; for there is no doubt (if the above account be correct*) that, in the eyes of the law, the shooting of all those men (except the first) was murder. And further, there is equally little doubt that, if the law had been properly observed, the natives engaged in the crimes which I have enumerated would have escaped with perfect impunity, either by getting clear away in the first instance, or by being afterwards declared incompetent to be put upon their trial.

I will now cite another case, which, though putting the matter in a different point of view, shows equally the inapplicability of the English laws in their unmodified form. Some time in 1843 a native was brought up before a magistrate, by one of the assistant protectors, for using threatening language towards him; and that magistrate was bound, by the words of his commission, to commit him to jail until he could find security to keep the peace; where (if the law be strictly adminis-

* It is possible that a slight colouring given to some of the circumstances of this transaction may give a different complexion to the whole. Were there, however, the slightest ground for suspicion that the above was not a perfectly faithful account, I should never have published it; but my informant had the best means of knowing all the circumstances, and no conceivable motive for misrepresentation.

tered) he must be still, as it would be impossible for him to find such sureties. But at present, to make the thing work at all, a dispensing power must be assumed by the magistrates, as to what part of the English laws shall be applied, and what not—a state of things not contemplated by their commissions, nor by any means desirable.

Having given a sketch of the working of the present system, I shall briefly recapitulate my objections to it—which are :

First—That the British law, being inapplicable to the social state of the aborigines, can only be partially carried out ; that it thus acts most unjustly towards the European settler—insisting on a rigid forbearance on his part, while it is totally inoperative for his protection from the natives, or for the punishment of their aggressions upon him.

Secondly—That, by affording the natives a practical immunity from *legal* punishment, it really does them an injury, by causing the less scrupulous of the settlers, or their servants, in secret, and without any efficient control, to take the law into their own hands, and to revenge attacks on their properties or lives at their own discretion, and in their own way ; that, in this way, it subjects the natives to a system of petty warfare, whilst it demoralizes the settlers, by accustoming them to the violation of the laws ;—thus placing the most effectual barriers in the way of the improvement of the one, and the civilization of the other.

I give the government the fullest credit for their feelings towards the natives, and believe that their conduct

towards them has, all through, been dictated by feelings of the purest benevolence. I admit, too, that, if in the adjustment of this difficult question, they have leaned to one side rather than the other, they have erred on the right one; for, although it be true that the settlers have but feeble means of making their grievances heard, the natives have none. Still there is a line, beyond which, indulgence to one man, is injustice to another; and if it appear that this line has been passed, and if, moreover, the result of this indulgence should prove to be injurious to the objects of it, by encouraging them in outrage, making them the victims of retaliation, and obstructing their advance towards civilization, by creating a breach between them and the settlers; if these consequences follow from the system, it is time that the subject should be fully investigated, and that some attempt should be made at improvement.

Closely in connexion with this subject is another, which I shall but lightly touch upon. This is the expediency of making the natives amenable to the British laws, for acts committed *inter se*. This comes recommended by the authority of Captain Grey, the present governor of South Australia. Theoretically they are, at this moment, amenable to the British laws for such offences,* but practically it is impossible to punish them for these, any more than for their aggressions on the

* One of the cases tried in 1841, was the case of Bon John, a native, tried for the murder of another of the aborigines. Judge Willis, having doubts on the subject of the jurisdiction of the court, referred a case to the Sydney judges, who gave an opinion in favour of the jurisdiction.

whites—and for the same causes; besides this, the injustice of doing so, without first giving them some instruction in those laws, which they are called on to obey, is so obvious that no jury would ever be found, to carry it into effect. This difficulty might be met by framing a simple code, embodying the salient points of the British criminal law, expressing, clearly and briefly, what crimes they should be held responsible for, both as regards the settlers and each other, and means might be found of promulgating it amongst them.

Three courses are open for the British government to pursue. The first is, to carry out, if possible, the principle at present laid down—that the natives are British subjects, entitled to the perfect protection of the British law, and bound by all its obligations, and to endeavour to force them, by putting in operation a system of vagrant laws, or some such means, to remain in fixed habitations, where, under the superintendence of officers similar in authority to the present protectors, but with greater powers, they might be subject to the vigorous control of an active police, until they shall have attained habits of order and industry, some instruction in the laws of England, as they affect themselves, and in the ordinary arts of civilization. The objections to this system are its injustice, its expense, and the difficulty, if not impossibility, of carrying it into effect. Its injustice in forcing free British subjects to adopt a mode of life distasteful to them, and unsuited to their habits. The other objections, the expense and difficulty of carrying it into execution, are so

obvious as to make it, in my mind, quite out of the question.

The second is to allow them to remain in their present wild state, and so to modify the English law as to make it more suitable to the circumstances in which they are placed. Such modifications to include the securing to them the benefit of legal assistance upon their being brought to trial—the doing away with the necessity of proving their capacity to understand the proceedings of the court, and to exercise their right of challenge—the making their evidence receivable in a court of justice, without proof of their belief in a future state of rewards and punishments*—the declaration that they should only be held responsible, either as regards the settler or each other, for those offences against the laws of England, which are also offences against the law of nature, or clearly incompatible with the welfare of society, and which should be clearly and simply defined—and lastly, the denying them, under certain restrictions, that indulgence, with respect to their persons, to which (according to my view of English jurisprudence) they have not entitled themselves.

The law which I should propose on this latter subject would be something of this kind, that, where a company of armed natives are carrying off sheep or cattle, and immediate pursuit is made by the owner and his servants, they should be at liberty to fire on them, in

* This is about to be carried into effect.

case they would not surrender themselves; but that in no case, where a man collects his neighbours and servants for the purpose of recovering his sheep, after a certain time has elapsed, and the natives have taken them clean off, should he be allowed to fire on them, unless in the presence and by the direction of a magistrate, (who should be bound to report the circumstances to the government, and be held responsible,) or in strict self-defence. The distinction taken between (what is called in law) fresh suit, and a case where a man collects neighbours, &c. is founded on this, that in one case it is an unpremeditated business, undertaken bona fide for the protection and recovery of property; while, if a similar license were given in the other, it might be made a cloak for collecting parties to go out and avenge aggressions by committing massacres.

The third course which may be pursued would be to combine, to a certain extent, both the former, and to declare that those who submit themselves to the English laws, fix themselves in villages, and exercise the arts of civilized life, should be entitled to the full benefit of that law, which should be modified towards all others. A registry might be kept of the former class, and they might wear a badge, of which probably they would be proud.

Being aware of the suspicion with which volunteer legislators are generally regarded, it is with reluctance that I have made the foregoing suggestions. Having, however, dwelt so long on the mischiefs of the present system, it appears to me that not to do so would be an unmanly shrinking from duty; and I will add, that did

I imagine that the course proposed would prove injurious to the natives, I should be as backward to recommend it as the loudest of those who arrogate to themselves the exclusive title of "Friends of the Aborigines;" but I am convinced that it would have a directly contrary effect. There is this difficulty in making laws for distant colonies,* (and the present subject must be dealt with, if at all, by the British parliament,) that those who have an opportunity of witnessing the practical bearing of a system, and its every day working, are generally suspected of being prejudiced, and candour compels me to admit, are liable to be so, while those who judge from a distance are, at least, equally likely to be misinformed. In order, however, to give full weight to what I have said before on this subject, which appears to me of great importance in more than one point of view, and not for the sake of speaking of myself, I may perhaps be excused for stating, that personally, I cannot be affected by the way in which this question is disposed of, as I have my residence in a part of the country where the natives are perfectly harmless—that I have never lost a single sheep, or any thing else, through their means, but, on the contrary, have frequently availed myself of their assistance in recovering such as were lost, and in other ways, and that I have always lived on the best terms with them—that from the calls of duty or of business I have on many occasions been in those parts of the country not so happily circum-

* The colonial legislature is restricted from passing any law repugnant to the laws of England.

stanced, and had frequent opportunities of judging of the state of things in them—and that it is my deliberate conviction that the present unsatisfactory relations of the two races in those parts arises from the unjust bearing of the present law upon the distant settlers.

Having dwelt at such length on this part of the subject, I shall allude more slightly to another branch of it—I mean the direct attempts which have been made to introduce religion and civilization. It is the less necessary to dwell minutely on these efforts, as from the total want of success which has (I regret to say) attended them, the establishments are (I believe) about to be broken up.

The total expenditure made directly on account of the aborigines of New South Wales since 1821 has been £51,807 12s. 2½d. The auditor-general also makes a memorandum that, as half the expense of the border police has been incurred on their account, they may be in addition fairly charged with half the expense of that force, amounting to £27,716 8s. 9d. This, however, appears to me questionable. Of the first mentioned sum the [expense of £17,792 13s. 1¾d. has been incurred to defray the charges of the several missions through the colony, and £25,191 14s. 4½d. in supporting the Protector's establishments in the Port Phillip district for little more than four years—the expense of these establishments in 1842 being £8,000.

The following are some extracts from a despatch from Lord Stanley to Sir George Gipps, dated December

20th, 1842, which contains a masterly summary of this part of the subject.

"I have read, with great attention, but with deep regret, the accounts contained in your despatches. After making every fair allowance for the peculiar difficulty of such an undertaking, it seems impossible any longer to deny that the efforts which have been hitherto made for the civilization of the aborigines have been unavailing; that no real progress has yet been effected, and that there is no reasonable ground to expect from them greater success in future. You will be sensible with how much pain and reluctance I have come to this opinion, but I cannot shut my eyes to the conclusion which inevitably follows from the statements which you have submitted to me on the subject.

"Your despatch of the 11th March last, contains an account of the several missions up to that date, with reports, likewise, from the chief protector, and his assistants, and from the Crown Land Commissioners. The statements respecting the missions, furnished, not by their opponents, nor even by indifferent parties, but by the missionaries themselves, are, I am sorry to say, as discouraging as it is possible to be. In respect to the missions at Wellington Valley, Mr. Gunther writes in a tone of despondency, which shows that he has abandoned the hope of success: the opening of his report is indeed a plain admission of despair. I sincerely wish that his facts did not bear out such a feeling. But when he reports, that after a trial of ten years, only one of all who have been attached to the mission 'affords some satisfaction and encouragement;' that 'of the others only four remain with them,' and 'that these continually absent themselves, and when at home evince but little desire for instruction;' 'that their thoughtlessness, a spirit of independence, ingratitude, and want of sincere straight-forward dealing, often try us in the extreme;' 'that drunkenness is increasing, and that the natives are gradually swept away by debauchery and other evils, arising from their intermixture with Europeans.' I acknowledge that he has stated enough to warrant his despondency, and to show that it proceeds from no momentary disappointment alone, but from a settled and reasonable conviction.

"Nor do the other missions hold out any greater encouragement. That at Moreton Bay is admitted by Mr. Handt to have made but little progress, as neither children nor adults can be persuaded to stay for any length of time; while that at Lake Macquarie had, at the date of your despatch, ceased to exist, from the extinction or removal of the natives formerly in its vicinity. The Wesleyan missionaries at Port Phillip, notwithstanding an expenditure, in 1841, of nearly thirteen hundred pounds, acknowledge that they are far from satisfied with the degree of success 'which has attended our labours,' and that 'a feeling of despair sometimes takes possession of our minds, and weighs down our spirits,' arising from the frightful mortality among the natives.

"In the face of such representations, which can be attributed neither to prejudice nor misinformation, I have great doubts as to the wisdom or propriety of continuing the missions any longer. I fear that to do so would be to delude ourselves with the mere idea of doing something, which would be injurious to the natives, as interfering with other and more advantageous arrangements, and unjust to the colony, as continuing an unnecessary and profitless expenditure."

With regard to the protectorate, he says :

"After the distinct and unequivocal opinion announced by Mr. Latrobe, supported, as it is, by the expression of your concurrence, I cannot conceal from myself, that the failure of the system of protectors has been at least as complete as that of the missions."

The concluding paragraph of the despatch expresses so well the feelings of every right-minded man on the subject, that I shall give it, even at the risk of spinning out this chapter to too great a length :

"I cannot conclude this despatch without expressing my sense of the importance of the subject of it, and my hope that yo^u

experience may enable you to suggest some general plan, by which we may acquit ourselves of the obligations which we owe towards this helpless race of beings. I should not, without the most extreme reluctance, admit that nothing can be done; that with respect to them alone the doctrines of Christianity must be inoperative, and the advantages of civilization incommunicable. I cannot acquiesce in the theory that they are incapable of improvement, and that their extinction, before the advance of the white settler, is a necessity which it is impossible to control. I recommend them to your protection and favourable consideration, with the greatest earnestness, but at the same time with perfect confidence; and I assure you that I shall be willing and anxious to co-operate with you in any arrangement for their civilization which may hold out a fair prospect of success."

It seems probable that some new system will be adopted in place of the protectorate. It appears to me that the protectors began at the wrong end. Collecting together hordes of savages, some of whom had never seen the face of a white man, without any means of controlling them, was a system which could have scarcely been expected to succeed. There was also combined with the large expenditure on these establishments a penny wisdom in details, which was calculated to render the other expenditure useless, even if the system had been of a more promising nature. The whole establishment at Mount Rouse consisted, in July, 1842, of the assistant-protector, an overseer, a constable, a bullock-driver, a carpenter, and, I believe, another man. I am not sure whether the constable was a convict or no, but three of the others were. Of these, the bullock-driver and another were constantly away fetching stores, &c. There are few men who, in such a position, would have firmness enough to control a mob, consisting

of several hundreds of unruly savages, who could and would, if things had come to a rupture, have eaten the whole establishment for breakfast. A system of temporising was the natural result of this state of things. The natives speared a calf belonging to the overseer; they brought the sheep belonging to the neighbouring settlers, and ate them at the protectorate; and on the overseer interfering, threatened to kill him. Many other instances of outrage and insubordination occurred, which had to be passed over. At the time of my first visit to the settlement, in 1842, there were three or four hundred natives encamped there, and the following was the daily routine :*—In the morning they were put into a pen, and run out, one by one, as sheep are when they are counted, when each received a mess of a kind of burgoo, or porridge, which he carried away in a hollow piece of bark. In the middle of the day they were all drawn up in a row, squatted on their heels, and a wheelbarrow, full of pieces of beef, was wheeled round, the overseer giving a piece to each in turn. It was amusing to observe the anxiety with which they eyed every piece as it was delivered; each of them, as they received their allowance, squeezing it in his hands, to ascertain whether it contained any bone or no; when it had much of this, or little fat, they freely gave vent to their feelings of rage and disappointment. They all appeared sulky, and had completely the appearance of sturdy beggars receiving a dole. The allowance not being sufficient to

* I was shown a paddock which had been tilled by the natives, but no work was going on when I was there.

satisfy their immense appetites, they frequently made forays upon the flocks and herds of the neighbouring settlers; and, in fact, this neighbourhood became the scene of greater outrage than any other part of the country, the tendency being (in the words of the governor) to "increase the irritation already existing between the two races." This assistant-protector was dismissed, and his place has not been filled up since.* The other protectors express themselves in desponding terms as to their success, although I have heard that their establishments were better conducted.

I cannot here resist the temptation of volunteering a little more legislation. In the first place, I think that the endeavour to civilize the natives, ought to be made in a way quite different from that hitherto attempted. Instead of collecting together the wild tribes, I would bring together a few of the most enlightened individuals of the most civilized tribes, with their families—men who had seen and could partially appreciate the comforts of civilized life. I would endeavour, under the direction of a good overseer, to make them useful in building huts for themselves, also in growing corn and potatoes, and such other employments. I would not force them to live in these huts if they did not like it; but they would soon find the advantage of doing so in cold and wet weather, and they should be made always to take their meals there, and to keep them clean. They should be fed well if they worked, and any that were idle or dis-

* A medical gentleman now does the duty, and also attends to the medical part of the establishment: for the discharge of these complicated duties he receives but £110 per annum.

orderly should be expelled from the settlement, while the more deserving might be rewarded by tobacco, of which they are immoderately fond, or by some other indulgence. It would be necessary to make some arrangements by which they might be allowed to absent themselves from time to time, and also to prevent them frequenting the towns. The principal men amongst them, their sorcerers or priests, might, if they entered into the views of the conductors of the establishment, be of great service in getting rid of their superstitions and prejudices, being probably the only persons amongst them aware of their being a humbug. One or two of those most distinguished for good conduct, might be given a uniform, of which they are very proud, and made constables. This is merely a sketch, and I have given the details for the purpose of showing my meaning, not from any idea that they are exactly what ought to be adopted. The principle ought to be this, that it should be esteemed by the natives a favour to place them on the establishment, and a punishment to expel them from it; and it is immaterial by what means this object is attained, for once this is established, the means of enforcing your regulations would be attained, and all real difficulty be at an end. As this feeling became stronger, the reins of discipline might be drawn tighter; certain hours of work enforced, and regular wages paid in tobacco, sugar, or slops; a certain time set apart for instruction, particularly in the laws; leave of absence given only for a limited time; with many other improvements which experience would no doubt suggest; and, ultimately, I should look to the natives thus educated,

as the most efficient means of civilizing the other tribes.

But whatever course may be adopted, I sincerely hope that it may be attended with more success than has hitherto accompanied the well-meant endeavours of the government. Above all, I consider it of paramount importance, even as effecting the natives themselves, that the laws regulating their relations with Europeans, should be put upon a more equitable footing, and while I should be one of the last men to propose a system, which I thought would substantially bear harshly upon them, I at the same time equally deprecate the indulgence of a mawkish sentimentality on their behalf, at the hazard of sacrificing the lives and properties of our fellow-countrymen, who are equally entitled to the protection of the laws.

I cannot conclude this subject without touching on a point alluded to by Lord Stanley, in the last paragraph of his dispatch, the extinction of the native before the advance of the white settler—a circumstance which seems to have occurred so uniformly, and without apparent causes adequate to account for it, that it has induced some persons to attribute it to a direct intervention of Divine Power; for neither the diseases consequent on intercourse with Europeans, nor the mortality caused by collisions with them are by any means sufficient for this purpose. The aborigines of Australia, as well as those of New Zealand and the South Sea Islands, are subject to periodical attacks of epidemics which commit great ravages, but probably they were so before the arrival of Europeans amongst them. It is possible that previous

to this event, when a district was depopulated by an infection of this kind, the vacancy was filled up from other parts which had not suffered; but now that the country is already in the occupation of Europeans, that this does not take place. The very scanty population of the country when first discovered gives some colour to this supposition, as well as the fact stated by Captain Hunter, in his account of the formation of the settlement at Sydney, that they were then suffering under the small-pox. At the Mount Rouse Protector's station, in 1842, the natives, who were there in great numbers, were generally suffering under inflammation of the lungs, accompanied by low fever, which caused great mortality amongst them, so much so that it was thought necessary to place a medical man on the establishment. This disease was still prevalent in 1844. These tribes lived more than two hundred miles from Melbourne, and being in one of those districts where aggressions on the whites had most frequently occurred, they had had but little intercourse with the settlers. I set this down at the time merely as an occasional epidemic, but I find that one of the Commissioners of Crown Lands speaks of a similar disease having been fatal amongst the Barabool tribe, near Geelong, in 1839. I find also from a work quoted below, that a disease exactly similar had followed the appearance of Europeans, not only in New Zealand, but in the South Sea Islands. It is also to be observed that, in Port Phillip at least, the white population did not, either before or after, suffer under this complaint.

In a work entitled "Polynesia," written by the Right Rev. M. Russell, LL. D., that gentleman, alluding to

the gradual extinction of savage nations when in contact with Europeans, inclines to the opinion that their extinction is a necessity, a mystery which we cannot fathom :*—

"It is a singular fact (says he) recorded by the missionaries, that disease has followed their steps in most of the islands which they have visited, even when no such personal intercourse has taken place, as would afford an explanation on the ordinary principles of medical science. A similar observation applies to New Zealand, where the people appear to have laboured under sickness of a kind *hitherto unknown*. A professional gentleman whose services were required at the station of Kaitai, writes as follows:—'I regret to state, that there has been more disease amongst them during this period than has ever been observed at any previous period of their history. Its nature also *appears to be quite new*, and such as they appear never to have suffered from before. It has in many of its features resembled the influenza prevailing of late years in England, which brought with it so much mortality, and this in like manner has been very destructive.' In allusion to another ailment, the same writer observes, that the epidemic from which they have been more recently suffering, has been more general, and of much more serious results."

This seems to have been of an erisipelatous nature.

* These extracts from this work are copied from a Sydney paper.

† This statement goes to contradict the supposition that the natives had suffered under this epidemic previous to the arrival of Europeans; but this is one of those subjects on which it is difficult to obtain information amongst savage nations. How few, even in England, know how often the influenza had visited England previous to 1831, or that it had appeared there at five distinct intervals in the eighteenth century, and once since the commencement of the nineteenth, namely, in 1803?

Mr. Threlkeld also, a missionary at Lake Macquarie, in New South Wales, writes thus :—

“During my seventeen years sojourn amongst these tribes, cruelties have not been so numerous or extensive as to account sufficiently for the decrease of the blacks, or to alter the opinion that the diminution of people, or the prosperity of nations, is from the wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The mortality amongst the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands places them in a similar melancholy position with the aborigines of this land, and ere a few years elapse, they will become extinct or amalgamated with emigrants from European shores.”

Without entering into the discussion whether the diminution of the natives can be attributed to their ungodliness—a conclusion seemingly negatived by the fecundity of the natives of Africa and Asia, who are sunk in the most debasing superstition—I shall merely remark, that there has been nothing brought forward to show that these visitations may not be traced to natural causes, far less to prove that “the extinction of the aborigines is a necessity which it is impossible to control.” The origin of epidemic diseases is always involved in so much obscurity, and the mortality arising from them frequently possesses such a mysterious character, that they have in every age, from the days of Homer down, been attributed to the direct intervention of supernatural power, though probably regulated by laws capable of being as accurately defined, as those of any other phenomenon with which we are acquainted in the range of physics. I have introduced this subject as a matter of interesting speculation, and not as one having any practical bearing on our conduct towards the natives, for whether it shall please the

Supreme Disposer of events that they should melt away before the white man, or should survive as a nation, to partake of the blessings of an enlightened civilization, it is equally the clear duty of the English nation to persevere in "acquitting itself of the obligations which it owes to this helpless race."

THE END.

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