

LECTURE
ON THE
EVILS OF EMIGRATION
AND
TRANSPORTATION,

DELIVERED AT THE
TOWN-HALL, SHEFFIELD,
On *July 23*, 1838.

BY WILLIAM ASHTON

SHEFFIELD :

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1838.

LECTURE, &c.

Gentlemen,—Being aware that the subjects on which I shall speak this evening have got numerous supporters, the principal portion of whom I am prepared to show are interested in their extinction, I have purposely prepared a few notes, in order that I may not depend altogether on memory, although the scenes of misery that I have witnessed were such as never to be effaced from my recollection.

When emigration to the Australian Colonies first drew the attention of the Local Government, and through their subordinates was made public, many well meaning men were induced to sanction the abominable scheme under a firm belief that Government would protect the interest of the emigrant. But when they found the system was one of *pounds*, *shillings*, and *pence*, without any regard being paid to the condition of the misguided victims, those supporters of the measure immediately denounced the plan as cruel and unjust.

Since, then, emigration has been carried on entirely by men who have, and continue to receive, a benefit by it, with this exception, as in all national undertakings, a few unthinking, but I must add benevolent, persons continue to give emigration their support, under a false idea, that they are rendering a benefit to the unfortunate beings, who are thus induced to leave their native land to seek a fortune amongst strangers. Having made these remarks, I shall now endeavour to prove how those who support emigration are benefited by it, and in doing so I will commence with the *Settlers* in the Colonies.

This task is rendered somewhat easy in consequence of the major part of my hearers being aware that the employer is always gratified when a superabundant number of hands are in the market, in order that they may be enabled to make the workmen labour at their own wages ; it would be useless my enlarging on this head, as there are very few now present but know from experience that the above is correct. The Settlers of the Australian Colonies supported emigration under the idea that could they induce people to emigrate ; that they could dispense with assigned servants, and by emigration being carried on on a large scale they would be enabled to obtain them at their own price. To accomplish this they suggested to the Government the necessity of selling the *crown* lands, and apply the money obtained thereby to further their own views. But recollect, those individuals who advised the *authorities* to sell the land, were men possessed of nearly all that their sordid hearts could desire, and they were fearful lest by emigration being carried into effect without the above plan being adopted, an humble but honest peasantry would be introduced, so that by introducing additional members to the community they took especial care that on landing, the emigrants should be dependent upon them for their bread.

The Home Government having coincided with their views. Lord Ripon, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, issued an order for the land to be sold in future, and not given away as hitherto to the emigrant, and the money obtained thereby to be applied as I have already stated. I now come to the second class of men, who immediately saw the advantage of the scheme, and in order that they might be benefited by the gross deception, formed in London an *Emigration Committee*, at the head of which was placed that dealer in human flesh and misery, Mr. Marshall.

Those gentlemen having elected themselves as the emigration committee, procured documents from the settlers in the Colonies, setting forth the high *price of labour* and the extremely low price of provisions. This committee became immediately the grand channel of deception between the Government of England and the abominable miscreants in the Colonies, inasmuch as all applications from persons desirous of going out had to be approved of by them ; and in order that the scheme might draw public attention, the committee had placards of an extraordinary description printed and circulated throughout the United Kingdom. Perhaps there are some present who have had an opportunity of seeing one or more, and perhaps they would consider, from the inducements held out, every one fortunate who might be so lucky as to obtain a passage ; this was only a natural conclusion, and even yet many wonder how gentlemen could join in such deceptions, seeing, as they may have imagined, that their services were gratuitous. But allow me to inform you, that Mr. Marshall receives out of the funds obtained to forward emigration upwards of £500 yearly ; and that the other members connected with the committee are connected also with the shipping interest, therefore ships might have remained in the docks unemployed had emigration to the *Australian Colonies* never been brought into practice. Upwards of £150,000 *per annum* has been expended in this measure,—a sum sufficiently large to induce them to be active in obtaining victims to the system, and living cargoes for their ships. It was soon found that this plan would not answer altogether the views of the Home Government, for the money paid through the treasury department had to be accounted for to the Colonial Government, and the Colonial Government had in like manner to account to the British Government ; therefore, the Government in England, in order to make emigration beneficial to themselves, determined to have a share in the profits, and adopted the following plan :—they had circulars printed and sent to all parts of the United Kingdom, addressed to the Chelsea Pensioners : giving them a description of the beauties of the Colonies ; the great demand there was for men to do nothing—merely to look after the convicts and see that they were not idle,—with extravagant wages for the same, and the extremely low price of provisions and liquor.—This deception took well : hundreds of these unfortunate men immediately offered to leave their native land, and Government gave these poor deluded beings four years' pension on condition that they (the pensioners) signed a deed, got up for the occasion, declaring that the money they received for four years' pension should satisfy all their claims upon the British Government, for their wounds and a life of warfare and misery. Thus were these hoary headed victims, in the decline of life, thrown upon their own industry ; for, bear in mind, that those men had to pay their own passage, and some of them had large families. So that on landing in the Colonies, with the expense of passage and the unavoidable outlay necessary previous to sailing, they were almost destitute. I saw the first ship-load of deluded pensioners land, and believe me, my mind was filled with disgust and indignation towards the authors of their misery. Need I go into particulars, and tell you how those men were treated by monsters who considered them even worse than useless, nay, as an incumbrance to the land ; how those who had daughters grown up were compelled through dire necessity to sacrifice their virtue, and become in that land of wretchedness prostitutes to satisfy the cravings of nature ; how fathers, and mothers, and children, who could not administer to the lustful passions of those Colonial gentlemen, were left destitute of shelter for the night. Yes, it is true the magistrates told the *keepers* of the watch-houses in Hobart Town, that *they might* allow them to remain in these dungeons for the night, but to turn them on the streets in the morning. I myself received the above authority. But I will not shock your feelings by tracing them through their various scenes of misery, for death soon relieved the major part of these victims of a thoughtless Government, from their earthly troubles.

But some will say, surely feelings of humanity would plead for their unparalleled misery, but do not imagine such ; pity there is none ; all the *finer* feelings of our nature were completely destroyed by the cold-blooded cruelties that were daily exhibited to the public view. And very few who visit that part of the world are susceptible of one tender feeling for their fellow-creatures ; for previous to leaving their native land, their minds are made up to realize a fortune if possible, even though it should be out of the blood of their fellow-man. There are exceptions to this general principle , but very few indeed, and those few are objects of persecution to the others, who are devoid of feeling. For it is a

general rule that any person who can entertain one pang of regret for the sufferings of others is not fit to live in a convict colony, as the most unrelenting severity and torture is considered absolutely necessary for the reformation of the ill-fated beings sent out there.

Even the Government acts upon this abominable principle ; for unless their minds are completely shut against all ideas of humanity, the lowest situations in the Colony would not be entrusted to their charge ; whilst on the other hand the most illiterate and abandoned wretch in the island would be protected and supported in any act of tyranny and oppression that his diabolical heart could suggest. Do not think that what I have just stated of the Colonial Government is too highly drawn, for I solemnly assure you it is an indisputable fact. But some may imagine that Englishmen are not like the wild savage accustomed to cold-blooded atrocities, and therefore must entertain sympathy for the sufferings of their fellow-beings. This is true when applied to them as a national body. But separate them ; let each pursue, unrestricted by the whole, his own inclinations, and then tell me, cannot the most refined villains in Christendom be found amongst Englishmen.

I am confident I need not go into particulars to prove the above assertion, for few have forgot the *blood-stained* souls of the wretches employed by the Government within the last 30 years. The names of Reynolds, Edwards, and Oliver, must be fresh on all your memories, and the dark deeds of those monsters and the ignominious deaths of their innocent victims is yet unrepaired by Him who says, “Revenge is mine and I will repay.” I think I hear some one saying, there are only three found out of a whole nation. But could those three have performed the awful tragedy unless assisted by others ? But look at the annals of the country ;—Keep in mind the Manchester massacre, and the butcherings that occurred at Derby and other places since ;—bear also in mind the horrid murdering propensities of Bishop and Williams, and scenes of other blood thirsty wretches, with the disgusting, cruel, and deliberate sacrifice of life under the *New Poor Law Bill* and then say are there not Englishmen to be found capable of being employed in a distant colony to perpetrate any act that the fiendish heart of man can devise ? Yes, some will say, but the poor emigrant, in our Australian colonies, enjoys the blessing of living under English laws. Well, I think we are all aware that even English laws at home are not sufficient to protect the poor and weak from the tyrannical despotism of oppressors.

It is a mistaken notion to suppose that the emigrants live under British laws. Any person at all acquainted with that part of the world must be aware that our Australian colonies are *penal colonies*, and consequently under penal laws. Reverse the picture and place yourselves under these laws that some may imagine English. Suppose the Australian Colonies were to send a few thousand convicts yearly to England, and suppose the Government should regularly, on their arrival, select from amongst them the most accomplished villains to enforce the laws. Would you consider it English law for one of these men to stop you in the public street and ask your name and place of residence, and because you might not have any one at hand who could prove that you was a free man, would you consider it English law to be taken and locked up in a filthy dungeon with felons and drunken men until next day, and then to be compelled before a magistrate to prove that you are a free man ? Would you consider it English to have your house forced open in the dead of night, and your family turned out of their beds by these unprincipled villains, and every thing in your house turned upside down, and then to be told that they were glad that the information they had received was not correct, as they had been told you had a convict in your house ? You perhaps might consider this not English law ; for mind these men can do the above without telling who gave them the information ; the law gives them the power of acting so without even communicating with a magistrate on the subject. Would you consider it English law for one of these men’s associates to be sent into your house to ask a drink of water, and for them to follow and find him there, and then to lay an information against you for harbouring a convict, and to be fined according to the discretion of the magistrates, from £40 to £50 for allowing a convict in your house, and that convict dressed like a gentleman, making it impossible for you to ascertain whether he was free or bond ? Would you consider it English law to be *tried* for offences against the laws of the country by seven military men instead of, as in this country, by a Civil Jury, composed of twelve individuals, and to have convicts’ evidence taken against you ; and those convicts to have indulgences held out to them as a reward on your conviction ? No ; I am confident you could not consider such as I have stated English laws, and yet such are the laws the poor emigrants have to live under ; but I will not occupy any more of your time in reference to the penal laws of the colony, but return to the subject of Emigration.

The Committee's attention became next directed towards the great disproportion there was in the male and female population of our colonies, therefore a ladies committee was formed in London, at the head of which was placed Mrs. Fry. This committee, I firmly believe, imagined that they should render a benefit by sending a few thousand females out to make up the deficiency, under the pleasing idea that they would be the means of propagating the human race in that part of the world. Those ladies, assisted by a few of the Malthusian disciples, who imagine a superabundant population in England to be the cause of the general distress, soon obtained abundant supplies of those tender victims for the Colonial market, and for the insatiable lust of the unfeeling wretches of our Australian Colonies.

I could wish to draw a veil over this part of the subject, for my soul sickens within when I reflect on the heart-rending distress of those helpless creatures. Oh, gentlemen, could you have witnessed those young victims, with their hearts ready to burst with unutterable anguish, calling upon their far distant mothers to protect and assist them, and have witnessed the satanic smiles of the bloated profligate, exulting with infernal joy at their hapless condition, you would, I am sure, have cursed in all the bitterness of your souls the authors of their wrongs. Shall I proceed with the subject, or throw a mantle of darkness over the unfortunate creatures and their distress. The subject is a painful one ; but I have a duty to perform, and that of great importance, perhaps to the future happiness of thousands who may yet be tempted to leave their native shores. Therefore I will go into the disgusting particulars of Colonial Society, in doing which I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible, and avoid, if I am able, making use of any language that might offend the ear of the most delicate. Before I enter into the state of society, with your permission I will read a statement of the consumption of liquor in that colony, published by Dr. Ross, the Government printer and editor of the Van Dieman's Land Almanack : —

Duty of spirituous liquors imported
in the year 1836, for a population
of 36,000 souls £89,345 10 4½

Recollect this is independent of the prime cost of the article, and of landlord's profit and necessary expenditure, so that, could the total amount spent in liquor be obtained, I feel assured that you would be enabled to form a correct estimate of that society to which so many thousands of our poor deluded country women have been introduced. I will here detain you to read a sentence or two from Dr. Ross's Almanack : —

“ The loss of health and life, misery entailed upon families, demoralization, debt, dishonesty, crime, expense of medical attendance, of lawyers, of police, gaols, restitutive laws and courts of justice consequent upon the above is fully equal to the amount of £153,889 8s. 4d. Shall this be suffered to go on, in the face of common sense, reason and religion, without one redeeming effort to counteract it, shall we wonder at any distress in the colony, at any extent of misery or of crime, when such mad-like abandonment to the most reckless dissipation, is not only carried on to such an extent, but even *sanctioned, licensed, and legalized.*”

Having shewn you one cause of this vicious state of society, I will now shew the effects. In Van Dieman's Land and New South Wales, the settlers are dispersed over a large track of country ; each dwelling being separated generally by miles of trackless bush. The farmer or settler, has from 10 to 30 hands employed, generally all convicts ; some may have one or two free men upon their premises, acting as overseers ;—those men are not allowed to leave their master's premises. The word of God is never heard amongst the principal part of them, and his name never mentioned but with horrid imprecations ; thousands of men are thus dispersed over an extensive track of the country. Let me ask, is it possible to restrain the passions of these men were their masters desirous of doing so ? No ; they could not ; indeed the attempt is seldom or never made. The frequent executions that take place for children being violated proves to the contrary.

It is true the masters generally keep two or three convict women on the premises, and those women are the most abandoned and profligate of their sex. Food is all the masters have to find them, and this costs very little, as he produces all himself, with the exception of tea and sugar. By these women being kept on the premises, he gets his house work done, and they are the means of keeping the men at home, and causes a kind of security in his own family. I could mention many scenes of open and

disgusting depravity that daily occurred, but I feel confident your own judgment will immediately suggest the cause of their omission.

It is to society, constituted as I have described, that the female emigrants were introduced. The first ship that arrived with these unfortunate beings was the *Princess Royal* ; she arrived in the port of Hobart Town in September, 1832, with one hundred and eighty females on board, from 11 to 25 years of age. They were lodged in the Female Orphan School, and I was one appointed to look after and protect them as much as possible from the insults of thousands assembled for various purposes. In the course of a few days men came from all parts of the Island, and those young and tender creatures were exhibited to the scrutinizing gaze of the assembled multitude, for each to select such as they might imagine would answer their purpose. Fellow countrymen, it is impossible for me to describe this agonizing scene ; oh ! that I could bring to your view the real picture ; that you might witness the streaming eyes and heaving bosoms of these kidnapped creatures as they bid *farewell* to their companions in misfortune ; and see them dragged away almost insensible, with fearful apprehensions of their future condition ; and hear their bitter lamentations of woe, with the fond and endearing names of father and mother being called upon until they arrived at the bottom of the land attached to the Orphan School, where bullock carts were waiting to convey them and their luggage to the house of their new master ; —a few days more and nearly all were gone, the remaining portion were not calculated to further the views of the settlers, consequently they were turned upon the streets to obtain a living in the best manner they could. The better looking and youngest portion of them had been obtained by keepers of public houses to draw custom ; and, believe me, the proprietors were not mistaken in their calculations, for the houses throughout the country were filled for some time to excess ; and all who did not accommodate themselves, after a fair trial, to the wants of the customers, were turned out of doors, with this remark from the owners, that unless they studied the interest of their masters and mistresses —(I need not state how that was to be accomplished)—they would have convict women, who always had done so. In consequence of this, the principal portion of them returned to Hobart Town, where I have seen them without a home, without food, and nearly naked, until compelled to sacrifice all feelings of virtue, and become, what those who first employed them wanted, namely, prostitutes. I remember well two sisters named Austin, one about 15 and the other about 18 ; they were very handsome girls, and of a very superior description. They both went to live with a Mr. Coe, who kept an inn, and they remained only a few weeks, during which time their bed rooms were frequently broken in upon in the night time, until at last, in consequence of their determined opposition to the base intentions of the customers and their employers, they were turned out of doors, and I saw them return to Hobart Town, almost heart broken, and one of them without shoes,—having had to find their way through a wild and mountainous country for upwards of 100 miles. One of the girls, previous to my leaving the Colony, got married, and I believe she will ever have occasion to be thankful to Providence for protecting her from the snares of deception and vice.

Thus were the first ship load of these fair victims driven to infamy and distress. It is unnecessary, for me to particularize every ship that has arrived since, and tell you how the poor creatures have been treated ; I shall conclude this part of the subject by observing that on every fresh arrival, the settlers have evinced the same reckless and abandoned disposition, with this difference, they have been particularly desirous of obtaining their prey as young as possible, and in some instances they have been greatly favoured by the committee in London in finding large numbers under the age of 14 years. But even these have met with the same unfortunate fate as the *Princess Royal's* cargo. They were used as a child treats its new toy, with attention for a time, and then shared a similar fate. When the first gusts of the loathsome and infernal passion had subsided, they were driven to find a subsistence in the lowest sinks of iniquity and disease. Yes, there is not one out of every twenty of the immense number that have been sent out to the Australian Colonies of these frail and deluded beings, but were, on my departure in December last, compelled to obtain their living in open prostitution. Surely, mothers,, fathers, and friends, will pause ere they intrust any more of their poor and innocent daughters to the tender mercies of these unfeeling monsters.

Having demonstrated how emigration has proved an evil to the emigrant, by showing the treatment the deluded pensioners received on account of their age and consequent uselessness, and having shown the unfortunate result to the female emigrant in consequence of the disgusting purposes they were wanted for, and having given a slight sketch of Colonial Laws, it only remains for me to observe —(as I cannot in one night's discussion of the various subjects enter into particulars)—that misery awaits the single able bodied emigrant as well as those I have referred to ; for this reason, independent

of others I have adduced, namely, they have to compete with convict labour ; and under the head of transportation, I shall prove that they (the convicts) are compelled to work from sun rise to sun set for a bare subsistence, consequently the emigrants cannot, if they reflect on the subject, imagine that the settlers will give them the wages mentioned in England, when they can have the same work performed by convicts, and at the same time gratify their malignant feelings by having the convicts' backs lacerated if the work is not to their mind. No, emigration is a cruel and abominable scheme of pounds, shillings, and pence, to the supporters of the measure on this side, and of domineering insolence, oppression, and lustful gratification on the other, with misery, despair, and death to the unfortunate victims.

Transportation is the next subject to which I am desirous of drawing your attention. My object is twofold ;—first, to show that convicts have not the comfortable life many imagine, by doing which I hope to effect in some degree the second—namely, to induce many to pause, ere they commit offences, as some have done, to get transported, under the idea that they cannot be worse off as convicts than as labouring men in their own country.

I shall pass over in silence the dreadful situation of the convicts at the Hulks in England, and the fearful apprehension of a long and tedious voyage, with all its horrors, and go at once to the convict's safe arrival at the destined port. The following scene from Loveless's pamphlet is sufficient to excite the pity of the most hardened .—

“ When the ship struck on the rock, the prisoners were all locked below immediately. The bottom of the ship was fast filling with water ; they called aloud to have the hatches opened, but to no purpose ; and when they were up to their middles in water, they rushed forward and burst open the hatches, and endeavoured to ascend the ladder ; the soldiers, however, at the top fired on them and killed many ; others had their throats cut with cutlasses. ‘ The man’ said he, ‘ who was going up the ladder by my side, was shot, but I escaped. When the soldiers with their wives got into the boat, two boys (convicts) jumped from the ship into the boat ; one of the boys was thrown overboard by the soldiers, the other, a soldier's wife hid under her petticoats, and he was carried safe on shore. Only eighty-one of the whole ship load was taken on shore alive, and a great number of them were so emaciated and crippled, that they were obliged to carry them to the hospital.’ The man who gave me the above statement was stationed at the government domain garden. Here, then, we see the poor unfortunate fellows trying to save themselves from a watery grave, but to be slaughtered by the bullet and bayonet, and yet, perhaps, fortunate thus to meet death in sight of their destination, and so escape what is worse, had they been brought safe to land.”

On their arrival in port, previous to leaving the ship, their age, height, and descriptions are taken, with the names of fathers, brothers, and sisters, with their *religion*, trade, and a minute enquiry of how many times they have been imprisoned, and for what offences. The morning after this examination is done, they are landed, generally about six o'clock, and about nine the Governor, attended by his suite, inspects them ; after which they are marched off in parties of about twenty each, in charge of messengers, and left at the residences of their new masters, where, if they are fortunate, they may remain for the term of their service ; but very few are so lucky, as they generally get to the nearest police station a dozen times a year, to have their backs torn by the “ cat-o-nine-tails.” I will here enumerate a few of what are made and considered crimes in that unhappy land : —

1st. Absconding, striking their master or overseer, refusing to work, or putting their masters at defiance,—the punishment for which is extension of sentence from one month to fourteen years.

2nd. Destroying their master's property ; losing, and not being able to account how and where lost, either sheep or cattle,—for which they are awarded a chain gang or a penal settlement.

3rd. For complaining of bad provisions, sleeping, or cloathing, or cruelty of their masters or overseers, without being able to prove the charge,—corporeal punishment.

4th. For being out after eight o'clock at night,—corporeal punishment.

5th. For being off their master's premises without a pass,—sent to a road party, or corporeal punishment.

6th. For not being early up, or not performing sufficient work, according to the master's wish,—corporeal punishment.

7th. Speaking to, or being in company with, a female prisoner without permission,—corporeal punishment.

8th. For not paying respect and obedience to all civil and military officers,—treadmill, solitary cells, corporeal punishment, or, on repetition, a road party.

9th. Being found in a public house,—corporeal punishment, or solitary cells.

10th, Neglecting Divine Service,—solitary cells, or the treadmill.

11th, Using abusive language,—corporeal punishment, or solitary cells.

12th. Betraying anger in their countenances,—corporeal punishment, or solitary cells.

The above are a few of what are made and considered crimes in that miserable place. But to describe all the different offences would be impossible, as one word in giving an answer to any question put to them, that does not please the person asking the question, is sufficient to insure from 25 to 100 lashes. I imagine you will conclude that these horrid exhibitions are not seldom, when I inform you that from official returns made from the different police stations in Van Dieman's Land to the chief Police Magistrate, I found on dividing the total number of lashes inflicted in one year, that they amounted to 70 lashes for every soul in the colony, free and bond, male and female. Yes, Gentlemen, some of those unfortunate beings have received from 10,000 to 15,000 lashes ; and those lashes inflicted in such a manner that renders them an incumbrance to themselves and the Government—their backs being literally cut to pieces, and many end their earthly troubles immediately after the punishment.

Allow me here to ask what feeling of pity can there be for the misery of the poor emigrant, when the children are daily witnessing such horrid sights as I have mentioned. I have seen children of very tender years, stand and view with apparent delight, the blood laying in pools between the stones, and the flesh flying from the end of the lashes into the air, and the poor victim calling aloud for mercy. It is not an unusual sight in Hobart Town to see from twenty to thirty of these men brought out in a morning to receive each of them from 50 to 100 lashes—inflicted by men who would immediately be tied up and receive fifty themselves were they to shrink from giving the cats all the force they are capable of.

Having made these general remarks on the misery of a convict's situation, with a few of the crimes that they are punished for, I will now, from the official returns of the local authorities, inform you how the whole of them are disposed of :—

Total number of male convicts ; 19,551

Assigned servants	9,672
Artizans on loan	765
Tickets of leave	1,850
Employed in public works	3,847
Constables	349
Chain gangs	1,435
Missing	391
Confined in gaol	94
Invalids	236
Penal settlement. Port Arthur	912
	19,551
Total number of female convicts	2,709

Assigned servants	1,252
Assigned to husbands	120

In Hobart House of Correction	456
In George's Town Do. ...	84
Missing	198
Tickets of leave	500
Invalids	80
In gaol for trial	19
	2,709

Total number of convicts, male and female 22,260

I will now give you a brief account of their situation according to the different heads under which they are placed : —

9672 *Assigned Servants*.—Men or women lent to the settler ; their work is laborious in the extreme, and they are under the greatest possible subjection, they are compelled to work from sun-rise to sun-set, and must on all occasions obey their masters or overseers' orders, which, if improper, they may complain of to the nearest police magistrate, who are requested to protect, as well as punish them. But should they complain and not prove their charge, which is a thing almost impossible, then their period of servitude would be lengthened, and a repetition of the most trivial nature as an offence, would insure them of a road-party or a chain-gang. Should a man be so fortunate as to remain out of trouble for 4 years, if his original sentence was for 7 years, he gets what is called a *ticket of leave*—14 years serves 6 years, and life, 8 years for the same indulgence. The food allowed to assigned servants, weekly :—flour 10½ lbs. ; meat 10½ lbs. ; soap 2 oz. ; salt 2 oz. The following extract from *George Loveless's Victims of Whiggery*, published in London, fully corroborates my statement :

“ He promised when I went to him, that if I would work well, he would reward me, and I used to work all I could, to try to please him, but let me do as much as ever I could, he was never satisfied ; he was always abusing me ; he did not give me above half food enough to eat. One day he told me, if I did not do more work he would take me to Hobart Town, and get me flogged ; this I dreaded, and that day I worked until I could work no longer through weakness. My master, as usual, said I had done nothing, and swore he would get me punished in the morning. I did not know what to do ; I walked away from the house ; my master took up a loaded gun and followed me, and swore he would shoot me, if I did not come back. I still went on, for I did not at that time care whether he shot me or not. The next day I was reported as absent, and after remaining four days in the bush, and nothing to eat, I was taken by a constable. When before the magistrates, my master said how well he had behaved to me, and what an idle fellow I was ; so that the magistrate would not believe a word I had to say, and sentenced me to receive fifty lashes. I was punished and sent back, and my master put me to carry logs of wood on my back, which I could not endure. I ran away again, and gave myself up to a constable, and was again sentenced to fifty lashes, and sent back. My master was more cruel than ever.

“ I then determined I would not stop with him if they hung me. I went away three times more, and got fifty lashes each time. I then told the magistrates that I could not live with my master, and that I hoped he would not send me back again. But Mr. Mason said he would see who would be master, either I or they, and I was sent back. I instantly started, was taken, sentenced to fifty lashes more ; and to go to Bridgewater chain-gang for three months, and then return to my master, when I was tied to the triangles this time, my back was in such a dreadful state, that the doctor ordered that I was to be flogged over the breech. After I came back from the chain-gang, my master seemed a little better to me for a week or two, and then began as bad as ever. Often when he and I have been out in the night, shooting opossums, I have levelled the gun and put my finger to the trigger. I hardly knew which to shoot, the opossum or my master. I used to think I should not mind being hung for him, but I should not like to go to hell for him, and this prevented me shooting him.”

1850 *Tickets of Leave*. — An indulgence given for good conduct, after serving in the Colony as I have before stated—4, 6, or 8 years, according to their sentences, without committing any offence. The Secondary Punishment Bill, lately passed in England, has made a material alteration in the convict's condition, more particularly those sent out under second convictions ; with respect to those who are called “ Educated Convicts,” their condition is wretched in the extreme, they are sent immediately on their arrival to a penal settlement, without any hopes of a remission of their horrid

sentence. I always thought the intentions of the Home Government were reformation, and not perpetual punishment and misery to offenders—and why men of education should be singled out as objects of especial wrath, I cannot conceive.

3847 *Men employed in Public Works*—Under the head of public works, is understood all Colonial improvements carried on by Government, such as making and repairing of roads, building of bridges, erecting public buildings for the different departments of public business, &c. The men employed in these works are deprived of every kind of indulgence, and are subjected to the most harrassing fatigues, their allowance of food is barely sufficient to support nature under unremitting exertions. They work from sun-rise to sun-set, Saturday excepted, when they leave off at noon, to wash their shirts ready for Sunday's inspection. They live in huts, dispersed over the country, near the place of work, under the superintendance of an overseer and generally a military guard.

349 *Constables*—Men situated as the policemen of this town, and it is unto men of this description that the Government entrust the lives and property of the emigrant ; they are possessed of far more power than the same class of men in England ; owing to the nature of the penal laws, and for the sake of obtaining indulgences, they frequently deprive innocent men of liberty for the purpose of obtaining it themselves. This I could easily prove, but time will not allow me.

1435 *Chain Gangs*.—Composed of very incorrigible characters, there are two of them, one employed at a place called Bridgewater, throwing a bridge over the Derwent, about 11 miles from Hobart Town ; the other chain-gang is employed in making a wharf for the landing of merchandize at Hobart Town, to induce ships to come along-side and discharge their cargoes. Here the greatest vigilance for the safe keeping of the prisoners is absolutely necessary, as the continual bustle affords frequent opportunity for them to abscond, which they seldom omit to embrace, they are under the military at both places, and wear irons on each leg, and yellow clothing ; prisoners are sent to these gangs for what are called serious offences, or for a repetition of minor ones ; their lives are truly miserable, being debarred of speaking to any but their unfortunate companions; their sentences in these gangs varies from 6 months to as many years, according to the nature of their crimes.

391 *Men Missing*.—These are convicts who have taken to the bush. These unfortunate creatures are driven to this dreadful alternative through the cruel usage of the settlers and overseers of the different road parties and chain-gangs. Allow me to inform you that the country is covered over with large trees called stingy, bark, gum, peppermint, light-wood, box, sysafras, cherry, wattle, and the oak. Underneath these grow dog-wood, tea tree, and honey suckle with various other sorts, making one dense forest, called in that country bush. Then these unfortunate men take into this dreary district to drag out their miserable existence ; the major part of them subsist upon kangaroo and opossum flesh ; when this fails, they eat one another ; be not surprised, it is true ; parties of 8 and 10 have left together their wretched homes, if such places of torture is deserving of the name, and taken to the bush, and procured a subsistence as long as possible, and then have murdered their companions, until only one has remained out of the various numbers, and when these solitary beings have been apprehended, the flesh of their last companion has been found upon them. I have seen these men executed, and heard them declare in their dying moments, the horrid and disgusting particulars of how they have murdered their mates one after the other, and lived upon their dead bodies, until the whole party, originally consisting of perhaps ten individuals, had been butchered, leaving the narrator and another only alive, and how he and his companion were afraid to fall asleep, lest the other should knock his brains out ; and how at last nature became exhausted in his comrade ; and then, how he deprived him of life, and immediately satisfied his hunger on his flesh, tearing the remaining portion from off his body and skin, started for the inhabited districts, to end his sufferings in an ignominious death, These occurrences are not unfrequent, and scores of others who are yet in the bush, have committed offences of a similar nature.—Let me ask what must be the dreadful state of misery that drives men to this awful condition ?

94 *Men confined in Gaol*.—It is almost useless my saying anything of this portion of the total number. The grand object of the judicial administration is that punishment shall follow as quick as possible the offence. So that the offence for which they are punished may be fresh on their memory. Could men in England be made sensible of the certainty of punishment of the most dreadful description, I feel confident that crime would diminish in place of increasing, in the alarming manner it does; for although poverty, in my opinion, causes many to err, yet were they aware of the acute sufferings

of convicts in our Australian Colonies, numbers would pause ere they committed themselves to such a state of degradation and wretchedness. Here perhaps, it might not be amiss for me to state my opinion of that remote place

From the accounts I had read, I became convinced, previous to leaving England, that I should be far happier in Van Dieman's Land, than I could ever expect to be in my native country. Dreadful mistake!—How oft have I lamented my foolish and credulous notions; how oft have I wept in the darkness of night, and deplored the inauspicious moment that my poor mother gave me existence? How oft have I wished that I could return to my original nothingness and bury in oblivion all my cares and troubles. But alas! those feelings of bitter remorse only augmented my distress. Months and years passed away, and I was the same miserable object, liable, for the smallest offence to have my back lacerated by the dreadful lash—for such is the fate of a wretch convicted, although his crime be of the slightest die—abused and scorned, and by men depicted the vilest creature beneath the sky.

263 *Invalids*—Those are poor enfeebled old men, and cripples. Government's attention to those unfortunate beings is truly benevolent, and reflects the highest credit on the Christian feelings of the chief authorities.

912 *Penal Settlements*—It is, I am sure, utterly impossible to convey even a faint picture of these horrible places, where the ill-fated convicts are cut off from all hope; they know nothing of the world nor its inhabitants, being doomed to continual thralldom and misery of the most agonizing description; my soul recoils within me when I reflect on those abodes of wretchedness and despair, and calls to recollection the dark deeds of murder that have been perpetrated in them. The inquisitions of Spain and Portugal in their worst days were nothing in atrocity and diabolical sacrifice of human life to these earthly hells. Speak of the wheel, the rack, and the torture, in mild language, for they were mild in operation, and somewhat quicker in dispatching their victims. Yes, the supporters of these infernal machines had to take the victims from amongst their friends and relatives, consequently had sufficient stimulants to cause them to be expeditious in satisfying their bloodthirsty souls, in the agony and excruciating tortures of their dying victims. But not so with the Van Dieman's Land monsters; they have their victims 16,000 miles distant from their country, home, and kindred;—they have them in these slaughter houses, locked up from the voice of humanity, and the soul-piercing shrieks of the tortured wretches is only responded to by the hellish grins of the unfeeling flagellator. The prayers and groans of the dying creatures are drowned in the bustle of renewed tortures and the rattling of chains attached to their unfortunate companions, and the soul of a miserable being burst through its earthly tabernacle, leaving the cold and heavy irons round the legs of the lifeless body to appear before the Throne of the Eternal Jehovah, as a witness of the tender mercies of man. Others, whose lives have become insupportable, wreak their vengeance on those instruments of hell, for the purpose of being executed in Hobart Town, where they hope to have an opportunity of disclosing the sickening cruelties of these cursed abodes of misery and despair. But this is denied them, they are hurried to the scaffold and launched into eternity, with their last breath uttering words of thankfulness for a quick departure from their earthly woes. I have seen these men brought on the scaffold, and seen the clergyman put his hand to the mouth of the dying man to prevent the assembled multitude from hearing their last words; and I have seen him, with eight of these unfortunate beings standing under the fatal beam, give the signal to the executioner, some seconds before the time, lest one word should escape in an audible manner from the quivering lips of the murdered victims.

I shall here conclude this part of the subject, for I dare not trust my feelings to dwell on the unparalleled misery of a convict's life, and I hope I have shewn sufficient to prove that transportation is disgraceful in the extreme to a Christian Government, and believe me that I have stated nothing but facts, and not being desirous of stirring your passions on the heart-rending subject, I have not mentioned one-sixth part of the cruelties inflicted on the unfortunate beings. I have for this purpose avoided mentioning the numerous names of individual sufferers, and particular circumstances, lest I might wound the feelings of friends in this country belonging to the victims of the accursed system. Allow me to add, that I am convinced severity in some particular cases may be necessary, but that this severity ought on all occasions to be tempered with mercy, is a duty incumbent upon the authorities to make the unfortunate beings sensible that by good conduct and repentance that that severity will be diminished and ultimately withdrawn.

Gentlemen, having always been of opinion that Missionary Societies, and the agents sent by them abroad, caused more bloodshed than they have effected good ; and having had an opportunity of convincing myself of the correctness of my former opinions, and having also mentioned the subject to several respectable individuals of this town, although it is a somewhat late hour, I cannot avoid taking this opportunity of mentioning the subject, at the same time it is utterly impossible for me to enter at present into the evils of the system,

I do not presume to say that good has not been effected in solitary instances, but when I reflect on the carnage, bloodshed, and violation of innocent, though uncivilized, females, I cannot but condemn the whole system. But I have been told by a genuine supporter of Missionaries to look at the pleasing accounts published in the Monthly and Quarterly Reports ;—I have done so, and find very flattering statements ; but there ought to be published with these accounts, and it ought to be placed in what is termed *juxta position*, an account how the Missionaries were received in a friendly manner, how the Missionaries found them without spiritous liquors, but that they introduced them with the word of God, and that they themselves have infuriated their passions with the maddening poison. But if some may have been more cautious than the rest, let them state how the men employed about their premises have made fathers and mothers drunk, whilst they have violated their innocent daughters, and that the cries of their injured children have aroused them from a state of stupefaction, and then, in endeavouring to obtain possession of their daughters, how they have been fired upon by the wretches who profess to believe in a just and omnipotent God. How the natives of those Islands have been driven from the land that had hitherto afforded them subsistence, and which they considered as their own, and their children's inheritance, to make room for the new comers,—how this and the other circumstances I have named has engendered a spirit of retaliation, and then let the Missionaries state how they, the savages, as the Missionaries are pleased to call them, have been hunted like beasts of prey, and murdered by hundreds of those cruel invaders of the soil, and how, in some instances, whole nations have been exterminated off the face of the earth. Let them publish the above, and then, if you find that the good effected by them is greater than the evils, give them, if you are disposed, your support ; but until then refrain from being a supporter of bloodshed, carnage, and violation, under the name of Christianity. I will conclude at present the subject by reading some beautiful and very applicable lines, composed by your talented townsman, James Montgomery, on the commencement of Missionaries : -

“ In placid indolence supinely blest,
A feeble race these beauteous isles possess'd ;
Untamed, untaught, in arms and arts unskill'd,
Their patrimonial soil they rudely till'd,
Chased the free rovers of the savage wood ;
Ensnared the wild-bird, wept the scaly flood.
Shelter'd in lowly huts their fragile forms
From burning suns and desolating storms ;
Or when the halcyon sported on the breeze,
In light canoes they skimm'd the rippling seas ;
Their lives in dreams of soothing languor flew,
No parted joys, no future pains they knew,
The passing moment all their bliss or care ;
Such as the sires had been, the children were
From age to age ; as waves upon the tide
Of stormless time, they calmly lived and died.

“ Dreadful as hurricanes, athwart the main
Rush'd the fell legions of invading Spain ;
With fraud and force, with false and fatal breath,
(Submission bondage, and resistance death,)
These swept the isles. In vain the simple race
Kneel'd to the iron sceptre of their grace.
Or with weak arms their fiery vengeance braved ;
They came, they saw, they conquer'd, they enslaved,
And they destroy'd ;—the generous heart they broke,
They crush'd the timid neck beneath the yoke ;
Where'er to battle march'd their grim array.

The sword of conquest ploughed resistless way ;
Where'er from cruel toil they sought repose.
Around, the fires of devastation rose.
The Indian, as he turn'd his head in flight,
Beheld his cottage flaming through the night,
And, 'midst the shrieks of murder on the wind,
Heard the mute blood-hound's death-step close behind.

“ The conflict o'er, the valiant in their graves.
The wretched remnant dwindled into slaves ;
Condemn'd in pestilential cells to pine.
Delving for gold amidst the gloomy mine.
The sufferer, sick of life-protracting breath.
Inhaled with joy the fire-damp blast of death :
—Condemned to fell the mountain palm on high.
That cast its shadow from the evening sky,
Ere the tree trembled to his feeble stroke.
The woodman languish'd, and his heart-strings broke :
Condemn'd in torrid noon, with palsied hand,
To urge the slow plough o'er the obdurate land,
The labourer, smitten by the sun's fierce ray,
A corpse along the unfinish'd furrow lay.
O'erwhelm'd at length with ignominious toil,
Mingling their barren ashes with the soil,
Down to the dust the Charib people pass'd.
Like autumn foliage withering in the blast :
The whole race sunk beneath the oppressor's rod,
And left a blank among the works of God.”

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