

SOCIAL CONDITION.

SAVINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

Working man's Paradise.

THE Colonies of Australasia have from very early days been regarded in the light of a working-man's paradise. The high rates of wages which have generally prevailed, and the cheapness with which food could be purchased, have tended to make the position of the wage-earners superior to that occupied by the same class in any other portion of the globe. These advantages have induced a greater degree of comfort, if not luxury, amongst a class in Australasia which in other parts of the world has little of comfort and knows nothing of luxury. A high standard of living is not conducive to thrift, nevertheless the progress of saving has gone on with great rapidity.

Banks.

Some idea both of the celerity and extent of this accumulation may be gathered from the increase of deposits in the Banks carrying on business in the Colonies, and in the following table the deposits in Banks at four decennial periods are given :—

Deposits in Banks (including Savings Banks).

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.
	£	£	£	£
New South Wales.....	5,645,101	7,989,801	23,006,720	40,390,159
Victoria	7,575,406	12,476,677	23,721,348	45,261,932
Queensland	334,503	1,647,830	5,633,097	11,720,112
South Australia.....	875,327	2,038,719	6,231,004	9,933,135
Western Australia	*2,487	*15,583	*23,344	1,398,417
Tasmania	†729,085	875,512	2,969,390	4,378,448
New Zealand	905,675	3,789,639	10,618,893	15,806,847
	16,067,584	28,833,761	72,203,796	128,889,050
Per head of population.....	£13	£15	£26	£33

* Savings Banks only.

† Banks of issue only

From this it may be gathered that the increase of deposits of all classes in Banks between 1861 and 1881 was exactly 100 per cent., allowing for the increase of population ; while between 1871 and 1891 the deposits per head of population increased by about 120 per cent. When compared with Great Britain, it will be found that the amount of deposits per head of population in Australasia far exceeds that in the older country. In 1861, indeed, the sum per head in Britain exceeded that in Australasia, amounting to £15, against £13 in the Colonies. In 1874 the total in Britain amounted to £25 per head, which ten years later, in 1884, sunk to £23, and in 1890 to £16. In the Colonies there has been no falling off at any period, and in 1888 the total deposits per head far exceeded the highest level ever reached in Great Britain.

Increase of
Deposits.

Turning to the case of the wage-earning classes in the Colonies, it will be found that the Savings Banks, which may be taken to be practically the Bank of these classes, show enormous development since 1861. From the return here given it is evident that the tendency for many years has been to an increase in the number of small depositors. The figures for the last decade show this in a marked degree. In the interval between 1881 and 1891 it appears that the number of depositors in Savings Banks increased from 311,124 to 708,509, or more than double. In 1881, however, each depositor had an average of £30 in the Bank, but in 1890-91 he had only £25. The amount per depositor in decennial periods from 1861 may appear to point to a serious retrogression, declining as it does from £47 to £25, but it is not so, for the large increase in the number of depositors must be taken into consideration. There is evidence that the less affluent classes of the community are more largely represented in the books of the banks than was formerly the case and the smaller amount of average deposit seems to show that habits of thrift have in a greater degree permeated the community. It is the total number of depositors and the total amount of deposits, therefore, which indicate the general prosperity of the people. A greater number of depositors

Savings Banks.

Habits of thrift.

than the comparatively small total for 1861 might probably be selected from the number in any of the other years noted in the table whose average deposits would far exceed £47. Queensland depositors have the largest amounts at their credit, averaging £36 7s. per head, while those of Western Australia have the least, their average being only £10 8s. 11d. The subjoined table shows the progress of accumulation in each of the Colonies for the several periods :—

Savings Banks.

	1861.		1871.	
	Depositors.	Amount.	Depositors.	Amount.
		£		£
New South Wales.....	12,203	615,409	24,379	945,915
Victoria	12,001	582,796	45,819	1,117,761
Queensland.....	242	12,193	6,769	407,134
South Australia.....	3,248	131,590	14,270	517,000
Western Australia	† 224	2,487	‡ 1,062	15,583
Tasmania	*	*	8,500	217,413
New Zealand	1,144	22,921	14,275	454,966
	29,062	1,367,396	115,074	3,675,772
Amount per Depositor ...	£47		£32	

	1881.		1890-91.	
	Depositors.	Amount.	Depositors.	Amount.
		£		£
New South Wales.....	72,384	2,698,703	143,826	4,730,469
Victoria	101,829	2,569,438	297,430	5,628,577
Queensland.....	20,168	944,251	45,885	1,666,855
South Australia.....	37,742	1,288,450	74,686	2,158,228
Western Australia	3,219	23,344	3,014	31,486
Tasmania	14,728	369,278	25,324	521,250
New Zealand	61,054	1,549,515	118,344	3,137,023
	311,124	9,442,979	708,509	17,873,888
Amount per Depositor ...	£30		£25	

* Information not available.

† 1863, first year of Savings Banks.

‡ 1872.

INSOLVENCY.

The view presented in the last section, of the accumulation of ^{Insolvency.} wealth, would be incomplete without a glance at the other side of the picture. The Bankruptcy laws of the different Colonies are even more dissimilar than the laws on most other questions of importance ; they have also been fluctuating, and the subject of many experiments and amendments. This renders any work of comparison difficult and unsatisfactory. The information here given is imperfect in relation to Western Australia, from which no reliable particulars have been obtainable, and also in reference to New Zealand, the returns from which are incomplete. In other respects the figures give a comparative view of insolvencies at decennial periods, and also in 1890.

It must be pointed out that some caution should be exercised in dealing with figures representing the liabilities and assets of insolvents, because in the present state of the law there is no means of compelling those who seek the relief of the Courts to give an accurate statement of their affairs. The natural tendency is to understate the liabilities, and to overestimate the assets, so as to make the estate look as favorable as possible. It is very seldom indeed, when a bankrupt estate is finally wound-up, that the creditors find themselves in so satisfactory a position as the schedule as originally filed by the insolvent would lead them to expect.

Schedules of insolvents not reliable.

Insolvencies.

Colony.	1861.		1871.		1881.		1890.	
	No.	Liabilities	No.	Liabilities	No.	Liabilities	No.	Liabilities
New South Wales.....	463	£ 580,727	544	£ 325,941	724	£ 370,290	1,193	£ 1,203,635
Victoria	1,287	1,088,298	631	444,117	620	303,892	795	2,301,271
Queensland	24	46,866	73	411,835	153	73,602	335	241,336
South Australia	108	101,140	247	246,713	215	123,629	77	58,398
Tasmania	155	173,933	25	62,560	33	113,770	76	85,746
New Zealand	*	*	737	*	1,406	823,018	652	608,533
	2,037	1,999,964	2,257	1,491,166	3,151	1,717,201	3,128	4,498,969

* No Return.

+ Returns not complete.

Decrease of
Insolvencies
generally.

From the above table it would appear that the number of insolvencies was greater in Victoria in 1861 than in any other year under notice; while in 1881 the extraordinary number of 1,406 was reached in New Zealand, a total greater than any other Colony has produced in any year given in the table; notwithstanding this large number, however, the deficiency between the estimated assets and liabilities was very small, amounting to an average of only £75 per insolvent. It is an important and gratifying feature that, in spite of the great increase of population, and the consequent extension of trade, the number of insolvencies has increased but little, while the amount of the indebtedness of the bankrupts per head is less than at some former periods, and the proportion of assets to liabilities is probably greater. The proportion of insolvents to population in Australasia has largely decreased since 1861, the numbers being, per 1,000 inhabitants:—

1861	16·09
1871	11·46
1881	12·87
1890	8·39

NEWSPAPERS AND LETTERS.

Australasian
Newspapers.

There is hardly anything more indicative of the social superiority of a civilized people than the prevalence of correspondence and a large distribution of newspapers. In these respects all the Colonies of Australasia have for many years been remarkable. In proportion to population, it is doubtful whether any country in the world can boast of a larger number or a better class of newspapers than these Colonies. Great advances have been made in this respect since 1871, and the rate of progress, both in number and excellence, has been even more rapid between 1881 and the present time. There is no means of correctly estimating the number of newspapers actually printed and distributed in the

Colonies, because the Post Office returns indicate but a small proportion of the actual production. Some idea, however, may be gathered for purposes of comparison with other countries, by noting the distribution of newspapers through the agency of the Post Office. The return for 1890, which comprises all the Colonies, shows that no less than 96,309,000 newspapers passed through the Post Offices, being an average of 26 to every inhabitant. Allowance has been made, as before, for newspapers entered in both the sending and the receiving Colony.

In the same year there were 172,596,000 letters delivered through the post, being more than 46 letters for every man, woman, and child in Australasia. Allowance has been made in this figure for about 12,500,000 intercolonial letters counted both in the receiving and despatching colonies. An examination of the statistics of other countries shows that the people of these Colonies stand absolutely at the head of the world's populations in this respect. The inhabitants of Great Britain have nearly but not quite so large a correspondence per head, but the people of no other nation can even approach it.

Amount of
correspondence.

PARKS, MUSEUMS, &c.

All the Australasian capitals are liberally supplied with parks and recreation grounds. In Sydney and the suburbs there are parks, squares, and public gardens comprising an area of 3,761 acres, including 780 acres, which form the Centennial Park. In addition to these there is the picturesque National Park, of 36,320 acres, situated about 16 miles from the centre of the Metropolis. Melbourne has no less than 5,293 acres of recreation grounds, of which 1,723 acres are within the city boundaries, 2,788 acres in the suburban municipalities, and 782 acres outside those municipalities. Adelaide is surrounded by a broad belt of park lands, and also contains a number of squares within the city boundaries, covering altogether an area of 2,300 acres. Brisbane, Hobart, Perth, and the chief cities of New Zealand are also well

Parks and
Recreation
Grounds.

Botanic
Gardens.

provided for in this respect. In all the Colonies large areas of land have been dedicated as public parks. The Botanic Gardens of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide are included in the areas above referred to. Each of these gardens has a special attraction of its own. They are all well kept, and reflect great credit upon the communities to which they belong.

Museums and
Art Galleries.

The various capitals of the Colonies, and also some of the prominent inland towns, are provided with museums for the purposes of instruction as well as recreation, and, in addition, there are in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart art galleries, containing excellent collections of paintings and statuary. All these institutions are open to the public free of charge.

PUBLIC CHARITIES.

As shown in the chapter on "Finance," wealth in Australasia is widely distributed, and the contrast between rich and poor, which seems so peculiar a phase of old-world civilizations, finds no parallel in these southern lands. That there is poverty in the colonies is undeniable, but no one in Australasia is born to poverty, and that hereditary pauper class, which forms so grave a menace to the freedom of many States, has, therefore, no existence here.

Propertied
classes.

It is estimated that in the United Kingdom six persons in every hundred possess property to the amount of £100; whereas in the colonies the proportion is not less than 12·3 per cent. This bare statement shows the vast difference in the conditions of life in Australasia and in the richest country of Europe. No poor rate is levied in the colonies, nor is such needed; for although it may happen that from time to time the assistance of the State is claimed by, and granted to, able-bodied men who are unable to

find employment, that assistance takes the form of wages paid for work specially provided by the State to meet a condition of the labour market which is certainly abnormal.

The chief efforts of the authorities, as regards charity, are directed towards the rescue of the young from criminal companionship and temptation to crime, the support of the aged and infirm, the care of the imbecile or insane, and the subsidising of private charity for the cure of the sick and injured, and the amelioration of want. State assistance to charities.

Even where the Government grants aid for philanthropic purposes, the management of the institutions supervising the expenditure is in private hands; and in addition to State-aided institutions there are numerous private charities, whose efforts for the relief of those whom penury, sickness, or misfortune has afflicted are beyond all praise. Supervision of expenditure.

The rescue of the young from crime is attempted in two ways—first, by means of Orphanages, Industrial Schools, and Reformatories, which take care of children who have been abandoned by their natural guardians, or who are likely, from the poverty or incapacity of their parents, to be so neglected as to render them liable to lapse into crime; and, secondly, by sequestering children who have already committed crime, or whose parents or guardians find themselves unable to control them. Rescue of the young from crime.

It will be noticed that the number of deaths from accident in the Australasian colonies is very great. This arises from the peculiar nature of the occupations in which a large proportion of the adult male population is employed. Although a century has elapsed since settlement commenced in Australasia, its resources are by no means developed, and very many men are at work far away from the home comforts of everyday life, and from home attendance in case of sickness or injury. Hospitals are therefore absolutely essential under the conditions of life in the country districts of the colonies, and they are accordingly found in every important country town. Necessity for hospitals.

INSANE PATIENTS.

The following table shows the total expenditure and the number of persons admitted to the hospitals during the year 1890, as far as information can be obtained :—

Hospitals, 1890.

Colony.	Total expenditure.	No. of persons admitted during the year.
	£	
New South Wales	142,688	15,756
Victoria	144,348	17,634
Queensland	102,179	12,874
South Australia*	12,416	2,026
Western Australia.....	.....	70
Tasmania	16,263	2,180
New Zealand	70,327	7,202

* Adelaide Hospital only.

Asylums for the Insane.

All the Colonies possess institutions for the care of the insane, which are under Government control. The treatment meted out to the inmates is that dictated by the greatest humanity, and the hospitals are fitted with all the conveniences and appliances which modern science points out as most calculated to mitigate or remove the affliction under which these unfortunates labour.

The following table shows the number of insane patients remaining on 31st December, and expenditure for the year 1890 :—

Insane Patients.

Colony.	No. of patients.	Expenditure.
		£
New South Wales	3,102	96,138
Victoria	3,627	108,380
Queensland	1,082	33,000
South Australia	817	22,634
Western Australia	125	4,000
Tasmania	354	13,868
New Zealand	1,797	35,210
Australasia	10,904	313,230

The amounts expended on destitute asylums and benevolent societies cannot be separated from other items of expenditure in some of the Colonies. As far as they can be ascertained they were, for 1890, including both Government aid and private contributions, in New South Wales, £79,164 ; Victoria, £70,867 ; Queensland, £28,906 ; Western Australia, £8,677 ; and Tasmania, £15,970 ; while the number of inmates of the various asylums was, at the end of 1890 :—

Colony.	Inmates.
New South Wales	3,219
Victoria	2,522
Queensland	773
South Australia	344
Western Australia.....	168
Tasmania	751
New Zealand	565
Australasia	8,342

A liberal amount of out-door relief is given in all the Australasian Colonies, the expenditure on which is included in the amounts given for destitute asylums and benevolent societies. Out-door Relief.

The total expenditure of the Governments of the Australasian Colonies in connection with all forms of relief and in aid of hospitals and other charitable institutions amounted in 1890 to £638,243 ; adding to this the amount of private subscriptions, &c., the poor and the unfortunate have benefited during the year to the extent of over £1,100,000. This sum, though not excessive in proportion to the population, may yet appear large in view of the general wealth of the Colonies, which should preclude the necessity of so many seeking assistance ; and there is the risk that the charitable institutions may encourage the growth of the pauper element, for while free quarters and free food are so accessible those who are disinclined to work are tempted to live at the public expense. Public and private expenditure in charity.

LAW AND CRIME.

Methods of
criminal
procedure.

Proceedings against a person accused of an offence may be initiated, by the laws of all the provinces, either by formal arrest or by summons. Serious offences are not often dealt with by process of summons, though on the contrary, in some of the colonies, it is not unusual even in trivial cases for the offender to be arrested. These circumstances should be taken into consideration when dealing with apprehensions by the police, which are unusually numerous in Australasia, as the subjoined statement shows :—

Apprehensions, 1890.

Colony.	Offences.					Total.	Per-centage to total Population.
	Against the Person.	Against Property with violence.	Against Property without violence.	Forgery and Offences against the Currency.	Against Good Order, &c.		
New South Wales..	2,080	948	4,159	140	30,335	38,568	3·5
Victoria	2,667	1,017	3,778	87	31,045	38,594	3·4
Queensland	1,771	*	1,624	*	9,008	12,403	3·2
South Australia ..	663	104	402	21	5,809	6,999	2·2
Western Australia	371	26	510	8	3,775	4,690	9·9
Tasmania	483	21	605	19	5,233	6,411	4·5
New Zealand	1,537	755	1,627	63	14,719	18,701	3·0
Australasia ..	10,478	*	15,914	*	99,974	126,366	3·4

* Not separately distinguished.

Cases dealt with
by magistrates.

In 29,433 cases out of the 126,366 dealt with by the magistrates, the parties concerned were discharged, either as guiltless, or because evidence sufficient to establish their guilt was not forthcoming; 93,244 were summarily convicted, and condemned either to fine or imprisonment; while 3,689 were committed to take their trial before a jury. In dealing with the figures in the foregoing table it may be assumed that all the crime, properly so-called, is included under the first four headings; the offences under the other headings being chiefly drunkenness and its concomitant disorderly conduct and foul language, and breaches of municipal by-laws.

The total apprehensions for offences other than those against good order, as they are called, were for each province :—

Apprehensions for serious offences.

Colony.	Number of Apprehensions.	Percentage to Population.
New South Wales	8,233	0·75
Victoria	7,549	0·67
Queensland	3,395	0·87
South Australia	1,190	0·37
Western Australia	915	1·94
Tasmania	1,128	0·78
New Zealand	3,982	0·64
Australasia	26,392	0·71

The number of convictions by magistrates is shown in the following table, which is noteworthy as illustrating certain peculiarities attending the administration of the law in some of the colonies. Thus, the number of persons arrested for offences as against good order, as shown by a preceding table, was 99,974, whilst the punishments awarded amounted to 78,725, or 78·7 per cent., varying from 90·1 per cent. in the case of South Australia, down to 64·8 per cent. in that of Victoria. The following are figures referred to :—

Convictions by magistrates.

Summary Convictions, 1890 :—

Colony.	Offences.						Percentage to total Population.
	Against the Person.	Against Property with Violence.	Against Property without Violence.	Forgery and Offences against the Currency.	Offences against Good Order.	Total.	
New South Wales..	1,795	429	2,191	6	26,571	30,992	2·8
Victoria	1,816	450	2,093	1	20,134	24,494	2·2
Queensland	977	*	768	*	7,769	9,514	2·4
South Australia	419	68	233	.....	5,233	5,953	1·9
Western Australia	217	13	317	.....	2,649	3,201	6·8
Tasmania	233	3	364	1	4,361	4,962	3·4
New Zealand	813	378	929	.....	12,003	14,128	2·3
Australasia ..	6,270	*	8,249	*	78,725	93,244	2·5

* Not separately distinguished.

Arrests for
drunkenness.

More than half the arrests, and nearly half the summary convictions, are for drunkenness. The figures for each province are given in the following statement, which also gives the number of arrests and convictions for this offence to every hundred of the population. The number of arrests in Western Australia is singularly large, being almost as high as the figures for South Australia, which has seven times the population. The work of the police in arresting drunken persons seems to be about the same in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, but while convictions seem to be the lot of the person arrested in the two colonies first named, in Victoria so rigid a practice does not obtain, for 43 out of every 100 arrested escape without being punished by the Bench, probably preferring to estreat a small amount of bail, rather than face exposure in the Court :—

Drunkenness, 1890.

Colony.	Total Apprehensions.	Summary Convictions.	Percentage to Population.	
			Of Apprehensions.	Of Convictions.
New South Wales...	18,654	17,022	1·7	1·5
Victoria	18,501	10,475	1·6	0·9
Queensland.....	6,332	6,192	1·6	1·6
South Australia.....	2,382	2,268	0·7	0·7
Western Australia...	2,097	1,595	4·4	3·4
Tasmania	1,151	1,116	0·8	0·8
New Zealand	5,900	5,744	0·9	0·9
Australasia.....	55,017	44,412	1·5	1·2

Arrests no
criterion as to
extent of
drunkenness.

A return showing only the number of arrests for drunkenness is not a safe index as to the abuse of alcoholic liquors, for a great deal depends on the state of the law and the manner in which it is administered, and it is evident that the maintenance of the law intended to preserve public decency will always be less strict in sparsely settled country districts than in larger centres of population where the police are comparatively more numerous, if not in proportion to the population, at least in proportion to the area

they have under their supervision. The quantity of intoxicants consumed per head is perhaps a safer index to the habits of communities living under like conditions; but comparisons so based should not be pushed to extremes, for as it has often been pointed out the larger part of the alcohol which enters into consumption is that consumed by the population who are not drunkards. Information as to the quantity of intoxicants used per inhabitant in each province during 1890 is given below, wines and beers being reduced to their equivalent of proof spirit:—

Consumption of liquor per head.

Consumption of Intoxicants per head.

Colony.	Proof gallons of alcohol per head of population.
New South Wales	2·68
Victoria.....	3·88
Queensland	3·10
South Australia	2·43
Western Australia	3·98
Tasmania	1·88
New Zealand	1·77
Australasia	2·90

The consumption of various classes of intoxicants in the several Colonies is shown in the chapter on "Food Supply and Cost of Living."

The following table shows the number of police, the number of inhabitants to each police constable, and the average area which Police in proportion to inhabitants.

PROPORTION OF POLICE.

each constable had under his supervision during the year 1890; it is obvious that in nearly every colony the police force requires strengthening:—

Police, 1890.

Colony.	Number of Police.			Number of Inhabitants to each Police Constable.			Area under Supervision of each Police Constable in Country Districts. Square miles.
	Metro-politan Area.	Country Districts.	Whole Colony.	Metro-politan Area.	Country Districts.	Whole Colony.	
New South Wales	594	1,057	1,651	651	702	667	294
Victoria	742	763	1,505	659	850	756	115
Queensland	177	721	898	519	417	471	927
South Australia ...	167	259	426	795	735	762	3,489
Western Australia	...	...	173	...	...	281	6,127
Tasmania	50	156	306	663	719	475	168
New Zealand .....	...	...	506	...	...	1,236	252

The record of apprehensions cannot be regarded as altogether a trustworthy indication of the social progress of Australasia, because it includes many kinds of offences which cannot fairly be classed as criminal, and the number of these has a tendency to increase with the increase of local enactments. The record of committals for trial for the more serious offences coming before the Courts, taken in conjunction with the convictions for crime in the Superior Courts, may be regarded as much more conclusive on the question of the progress of society or the reverse. In some respects even this evidence is misleading, for in the less populous provinces there are no Courts intermediary between the Magistrates and the Supreme Courts, so that many offences which, in New South Wales and Victoria for example, are tried by a jury are in some of the other provinces dealt with by the Magistrates.

Decrease of
crime.

From the following table it will be seen that while the number of apprehensions has decreased from 43·3 per thousand of population in 1861 to 33·8 in 1890, committals have decreased from 2·2 to 1·0 per thousand, and convictions by jury from 1·3 to 0·6 per thousand in the same period.

Apprehensions, Committals, and Convictions.

Year.	Per 1,000 of Population.		
	Apprehensions.	Committals.	Convictions in Superior Courts.
1861	43·3	2·2	1·3
1871	36·2	1·4	0·8.
1881	43·2	1·2	0·7.
1890	33·8	1·0	0·6

In noting these facts and comparing results with that obtained in Great Britain during the same period, it must not be forgotten that some of the provinces of Australasia have been compelled gradually to reform a portion of their original population, and that in the case of colonies such as Victoria and Queensland, not originally peopled in any degree by convicts, the attractions of the gold-fields have drawn within their borders a population by no means free from criminal instincts and antecedents. Viewed in this light the steady progress made cannot but be regarded as exceedingly satisfactory, and the expectation may be not unreasonably entertained that the same improvement will be continued until the ratio of crime to population will compare favourably with that of any part of the world.

Progress of morality.

It is peculiar circumstance that, though the people of Australasia are of one blood, and the laws against crime are practically the same in each Colony, some of the Colonies show a far greater ratio of conviction for serious crime than do the others. A crude theory has been put forward that this pre-eminence in crime is due to a convict taint in the Colonies possessing a comparatively high record. The incorrectness of this presumption will be manifest, since Tasmania—the province now in the most favourable position in regard to serious crime—is the one which suffered most from the transportation system. Whatever be the explanation, the fact, however, remains that New South Wales, Western

Greater ratio of convictions in certain Colonies.

COMMITTALS AND CONVICTIONS.

Australia, and Queensland have a higher rate of criminal convictions than the other provinces, and that South Australia shows a marked contrast in its freedom from serious crime. The following table shows the convictions in the Superior Courts of the different Colonies, at decennial periods, from 1861 to 1890 :—

Convictions at Decennial Periods :—

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1890.
New South Wales	437	628	1,066	955
Victoria	846	511	332	662
Queensland	24	91	92	275
South Australia	62	91	213	82
Western Australia	35	65	61	41
Tasmania	127	74	51	46
New Zealand	100	162	270	227
Australasia	1,631	1,622	2,085	2,288

Committals by magistrates.

The committals by magistrates, and the convictions in the Superior Courts of each province per 1,000 of population during 1890, were as follows :—

Committals and Convictions, 1890 :—

Colony.	Per 1,000 of Population.	
	Committals.	Convictions.
New South Wales	1·3	0·9
Victoria	1·0	0·6
Queensland	0·8	0·7
South Australia	0·5	0·3
Western Australia	1·4	0·9
Tasmania	0·8	0·3
New Zealand	0·8	0·4
Australasia	1·0	0·6

A classification of the offences for which the convictions took place is given in the subjoined table :—

Classification of offences.

Convictions in Superior Courts, 1890 :—

Colony.	Offences.				Total.
	Against the Person.	Against Property, with Violence.	Against Property without Violence, Forgery, &c.	Against Good Order, &c.	
New South Wales.....	221	135	548	51	955
Victoria	105	174	355	28	662
Queensland	51	11	200	13	275
South Australia	21	3	49	9	82
Western Australia ...	14	.....	26	1	41
Tasmania	17	.....	14	15	46
New Zealand	40	47	132	8	227
Australasia	469	370	1,324	125	2,288

The very large number of convictions in New South Wales may perhaps be accounted for to some extent by a more rigorous administration of the law than obtains in other provinces ; partly, also, to the fact of there being no law to prevent the influx of criminals, such as exists, and is strictly enforced, in some of the other Colonies.

Convictions in New South Wales.

The punishment of death is very seldom resorted to except in cases of murder, though formerly such was not the case. Thus, in 1861, the executions in the whole of the Colonies amounted to 20 ; they had fallen to 8 in 1871, to 5 in 1881, and to 2 in 1890. One of these last-mentioned took place in New South Wales, the other in Queensland. In South Australia, the extreme penalty has been most sparingly inflicted, executions having numbered only 8 during the last 20 years, and none having occurred since 1883. The following table shows the number of executions in each province, in each decade of the last 50 years, as far as the returns are available :—

Capital Punishment.

PRISONERS IN CONFINEMENT.

Executions, 1841-1890.

Colony.	1841-50.	1851-60.	1861-70.	1871-80.	1881-90.
New South Wales	} 68	37	34	27	23
Victoria		47	41	19	13
Queensland		1	14	18	15
South Australia .....	.....	7	12	6	2
Tasmania	83	32	15	3	5
New Zealand.....	.....	.....	.....	12	8
Total	151	124	116	85	66

Number of
Prisoners in
Gaols.

The returns relating to the prisons of the Colonies are in some cases very incomplete. The prisoners in confinement at any specified time may be divided into those who have been tried and sentenced, those who are awaiting their trial, and debtors. The returns of four of the Colonies allow of this distinction being made :—

Prisoners in Confinement on 31st December, 1890.

Colony.	Tried and Sentenced.	Awaiting Trial.	Debtors.	Total.
New South Wales.....	2,292	129	4	2,425
Victoria	1,769	118	.....	1,887
South Australia.....	242	10	.....	252
New Zealand	517	43	2	562
Total	4,820	300	6	5,126

The returns of Queensland and Tasmania give the total number of prisoners in confinement on 31st December as 635 and 174 respectively, while Western Australia returns a daily average of 265. Taking this figure to be correct for 31st December, this would give a total prison population for Australasia of 6,200, or about 1·6 in every thousand of population.

SUICIDES.

Suicides would unfortunately appear to be increasing in number, Suicides. if not in proportion to population. The following table, although imperfect as regards Western Australia, indicates a portion of the past history and present position of the Colonies in this respect :—

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1890.	Average of 10 years. 1881-1890.
New South Wales	45	30	83	104	93
Victoria	64	90	102	123	110
Queensland	°	8	30	67	48
South Australia	13	11	34	22	27
Western Australia	1	*	4	5	5
Tasmania	7	4	6	17	7
New Zealand.....	*	°	42	64	59
Total	130	143	301	402	349
Per 100,000 of population	13·0	8·4	10·9	10·8	10·7

* Information not available.

Compared with the total number of deaths, suicides in the Australasian colonies during the last twenty years (except in Western Australia where the information is only available for eight years), show the following proportion per 100,000 :—

Deaths by Suicide in Australasia, 1871-90.

Colony.	Per 100,000 Deaths.	Per 100,000 Inhabitants.
New South Wales	639	9·6
Victoria	749	11·6
Queensland	889	15·1
South Australia	602	8·6
Western Australia.....	774	12·8
Tasmania	363	5·7
New Zealand	812	9·2
Australasia	704	10·3

Tasmania, therefore, stands in a more favourable position than any of the other Colonies, and is the only Colony in which the rate is less than in the United Kingdom, where deaths by suicides average only 7 per 100,000 of population. Compared with the rates of some European countries that of Australasia is however, Rate of deaths by suicide.

small, for during the years 1885-87 there were no less than 13·0 suicides in Belgium, 15·9 in Austria, 20·5 in France, and 20·8 in Germany per 100,000 inhabitants.

ILLEGITIMACY.

Births of Illegitimate Children and Total Births.

	1871.		1881.		1890.	
	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.
New South Wales	782	20,143	1,263	28,993	2,051	38,960
Victoria.....	747	27,382	1,382	27,145	1,913	37,578
Queensland	156	5,205	345	8,220	748	15,407
South Australia ...	*	7,082	*	10,708	259	10,364
Western Australia	*	760	*	1,005	*	1,561
Tasmania	*	3,053	*	3,918	*	4,813
New Zealand	*	10,592	534	18,732	603	18,278
	1,685	74,217	3,524	98,721	5,574	126,961
Per cent. of Births	3·19	.....	4·24	.....	4·62	.....

* Information not available.

Illegitimacy.

Illegitimacy also is increasing upon the whole in Australasia, as the table just given shows. The ratio, indeed, compared with the total births is still rather better than in England; but while the percentage of illegitimate births has steadily declined during the last fifty years in England, it has advanced in Australasia during the period included in the table. The following are the average annual percentages of illegitimate births to total births, calculated over a series of years for each of the Colonies and the United Kingdom:—

	Illegitimate Births per cent.
New South Wales.....	4·4
Victoria.....	4·5
Queensland.....	4·3
South Australia.....	2·2
Western Australia	4·2
Tasmania	4·2
New Zealand	2·7
England	5·4
Ireland	2·3
Scotland	9·3

DIVORCE.

The question of divorce, which has assumed considerable importance owing to recent legislation on the subject, is one of much interest, the more so because for some years past all the Colonies of Australasia have offered large facilities for divorce in all cases coming within the law. The prevailing opinion has been that such facilities were calculated to increase divorce to an extent that would prove hurtful to public morals. So far as the experience of these Colonies goes, at present the fear would seem to be groundless, but sufficient time has not yet elapsed to enable any definite opinion to be hazarded.

In New South Wales the chief grounds on which divorce is granted are adultery since marriage on the part of the wife, and adultery with cruelty on the part of the husband. A measure has, however, passed through both Houses of the Legislature, and will probably soon come into force, which will in the main assimilate the law to that of Victoria, where in addition to the grounds mentioned above divorces may be granted on both sides for desertion for over three years, habitual drunkenness, habitual cruelty and neglect, imprisonment for over three years and still in prison on commuted capital sentence, or under penal servitude for seven years, conviction within one year previously of attempt to murder, or assault with intent to commit grievous bodily harm, assault or cruel beating, and, in the case of the husband, five years frequent convictions for crime, and habitually leaving wife without support. In the colonies of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, divorces are granted principally for adultery on the part of the wife, and adultery coupled with desertion for over two years on the part of the husband.

The following table shows the number of decrees for dissolution of marriage, and for judicial separation granted in each Colony in

NUMBER OF DIVORCES.

quinquennial periods since 1867, as far as it is possible to procure the information :—

Divorces, &c., 1867-1890.

Colony.	1867-70.		1871-75.		1876-80.		1881-85.		1886-90.	
	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.
New South Wales .....	...	...	10	...	81	2	98	13	171	29
Victoria	31	8	33	6	41	2	74	8	124	9
Queensland .....	...	...	4	1	14	...	5	2	26	3
South Australia	7	1	22	3	35	2	31	10	23	2
Western Australia	6	2	...	...	1	1	5	...	8	...
Tasmania	1	1	9	...	9	...	9	...	15	2
New Zealand.....	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	110	5
Australasia	45	12	78	10	181	7	222	33	477	50

* Information not available.

Divorce was legalised in New South Wales in 1873, and in Queensland in 1870, so that no figures appear for those colonies in the first quinquennial period. The totals for all except the last period are exclusive of New Zealand.

Sufficient data are not to hand to admit of a comparison of divorces and marriages, except on the basis of the number of each in any year. Taking the figures in the foregoing table, the following results are shown :—

Divorces, &c., per 10,000 Marriages.

Colony.	1867-70.	1871-75.	1876-80.	1881-85.	1886-90.
New South Wales.....	...	+11·2	32·0	31·1	51·7
Victoria	20·9	16·0	16·9	24·4	31·1
Queensland.....	...	8·0	18·7	6·0	19·0
South Australia.....	15·6	33·5	34·6	33·1	24·3
Western Australia	117·8	...	20·5	44·8	53·5
Tasmania	7·8	27·4	22·0	18·0	35·4
New Zealand	*...	*..	*...	*...	63·5

* Information not available. † 1874 and 1875 only.

PROPORTION OF DIVORCES.

377

In the subjoined table will be found the figures for each of the years 1886-90, from which it will be seen that, taking the colonies as a whole, divorce is decidedly increasing:—

Divorces, &c., 1886-90.

Colony.	1886.		1887.		1888.		1889.		1890.	
	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.
New South Wales	32	4	25	3	28	5	44	8	42	9
Victoria	16	...	18	5	28	1	22	3	40	...
Queensland	1	...	...	1	6	...	11	...	8	2
South Australia	10	1	3	1	2	...	6	...	2	...
Western Australia	2	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	3	...
Tasmania	6	1	...	...	4	...	3	1	2	...
New Zealand.....	24	...	16	1	32	...	17	1	21	3
Australasia	91	6	62	11	102	6	104	13	118	14
Totals	97		73		108		117		132	
Number of marriages	25,079		25,067		27,000		26,810		27,525	
Divorces and Separations per 10,000 marriages ...	38·7		29·1		40·0		43·6		48·0	

The proportion of divorces to 10,000 marriages is much higher in the colonies than in the United Kingdom; but, at the same time, very much lower than in most of the other European countries or the United States.

Divorces (inclusive of Judicial Separations) during the years 1877-86, per 10,000 Marriages.

Country.	Divorces per 10,000 Marriages.	Country.	Divorces per 10,000 Marriages.
Ireland	2	Hungary	64
Austria	10	Belgium	69
Canada	12	Sweden	73
United Kingdom.....	18	Holland	91
England	19	Roumania	106
Russia	22	France.....	127
Italy	24	Germany.....	152
Scotland	29	Denmark.....	406
Norway.....	30	United States	444
Poland	55	Switzerland	468

Ratio of
insanity.

INSANITY.

The number of insane persons under official cognizance throughout Australasia on the 31st December, 1890, was 11,019. This represents 2·9 per 1,000 of the population. The rates in the United Kingdom for the same period were—England, 3·0; Scotland, 3·1; and Ireland, 3·5. The amount of insanity in Australasia and in England, compared with their respective populations, is, therefore, about the same, though there appears to be a tendency in the latter country for the rate to increase. The ratios, both in Scotland and Ireland, are higher than in the rest of Great Britain or in Australasia. The following table shows the proportion of lunacy in each of the Colonies at the end of 1890, from which it will appear that the greatest proportion is to be found in Victoria, and the smallest in Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia :—

	Insane persons per 1,000 of population.
New South Wales.....	2·8
Victoria	3·3
Queensland.....	2·8
South Australia.....	2·6
Western Australia.....	2·6
Tasmania	2·2
New Zealand	2·9
Australasia.....	2·9

The following figures are given by Mulhall for a series of years, in most cases from 1884 to 1888 :—

Number of Insane per 1,000 Inhabitants.

Country.	Number of Insane.	Country.	Number of Insane.
Ireland	3·7	Austria	2·0
United States	3·3	Canada	1·8
England	3·2	Italy	1·7
Scotland	3·2	Belgium and Holland ...	1·2
Scandinavia	2·9	Russia	1·1
France	2·5	Switzerland	1·1
Germany	2·4	Spain and Portugal	0·7

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The preceding pages contain but a brief sketch, or imperfect outline, of the present condition of the Australasian Colonies; showing, in fact, only the most prominent features, but leaving unnoticed an immense number of details, which, if there were space to introduce them, would add considerably to the impressiveness of the picture. Even the material resources of these vast provinces have not been fully indicated, for nothing has been said of the magnificent timber, unlimited in quantity and unsurpassed for quality, which abounds in every part of Australasia. Nothing has been said, either, of the boundless supplies of fish which are to be obtained in every part of the enormous coastline of these provinces, which will one day form the source of a large and profitable trade. The political institutions of the Seven Colonies have been described, but very little has been said of the system of local self-government which, in one form or another, pervades Australasia to a greater or less extent; nor has there been room to dilate at any length upon the literary, scientific, and charitable institutions which are to be found in all the principal centres of Australasian population, diffusing the blessings of art, science, and literature on the one hand, and soothing the pains of sickness, and mitigating the sorrows of distress, on the other. Enough has been said, however, to show how these great Colonies, from the humblest beginnings, have grown and expanded into important provinces, peopled with a race of hardy, enterprising, and industrious colonists, with free institutions such as are enjoyed by few nations in the old world, and without those social and caste impediments which are in older countries so great a hindrance to the march of civilization.

Australasia's
future.

It is impossible for a reflective mind to survey the progress made by Australasia in little more than a century without asking the question, "What will the future be?" It scarcely requires the gift of prophecy to find an answer. Here is an enormous territory, with illimitable resources implanted by Nature, without taking into account the possibilities of development by culture and acclimatisation. Here is a people who one hundred years ago found Australasia a desert, but who have already begun to make it blossom like the rose. It is not to be supposed that they will rest content with what they have done, but rather that the progress they have already made will stimulate them to a further advance. They will not heedlessly trample under foot the vast mineral riches they know to underlie the soil; they will not abstain from gathering those plenteous fruits of Nature which are to be had for little more than the labour of stretching out the hand. On the contrary, they will increase in numbers, in wealth, in intelligence, and in power, and the Seven Colonies of Australasia, whether federated into one State, or as separate communities united only by the common bond of kinship, are destined in the near future to play an important part in the world's progress, as much on account of the enterprise of their people as by reason of the magnitude of their territories and the extent of their resources.

