

441. According to the returns of the stock inspectors, the pigs imported overland in 1876 numbered 1,029. According to the Customs returns, the total number of pigs imported in the same year numbered 5,235, but it is not stated how many were imported by land and how many by sea. Imports of pigs.

442. The weights and measures used in Victoria are in every respect similar to those in use in the United Kingdom. Weights and measures.

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PART VII.—LAW, CRIME, ETC.

443. The system whereby persons acquiring possession of land, either by transfer, inheritance, or other means, may receive a title thereto direct from the Crown, was first introduced into Victoria in the year 1862, and continues in force to the present period. Transfer of Land Statute.

444. All lands alienated from the Crown since the introduction of the system have come at once under its provisions; and lands alienated prior to its inauguration can be brought under them, provided a clear title be produced, or a title containing only a slight imperfection. In the latter case the title is given subject to such imperfection, which is noted on the deed. Lands under the Statute.

445. The assurance and indemnity fund established under this Act to secure the Government against possible losses is formed chiefly by the payment by each person bringing property under the Transfer of Land Statute of an amount equal to one halfpenny in the pound of the value of such property. The balance to the credit of this fund at the end of 1876 was £41,598 18s., of which £23,000 had been invested in Government stock. Three claims have been made upon the fund since its first formation, and £718 0s. 4d. has been paid to claimants. Assurance fund.

446. The following is a statement of the transactions which took place under the Transfer of Land Statute in 1875 and 1876. A general increase will be observed in the items:— Transactions under the Statute, 1875 and 1876.

TRANSFER OF LAND STATUTE, 1875 AND 1876.

			1875.		1876.
Applications to bring land under the Act	...	number	1,032	...	1,128
Extent of land included	...	acres	31,019	...	44,339
Value of land included	...	£	900,594	...	1,018,626
Certificates of title issued	...	number	9,535	...	10,045
Transfers, mortgages, leases, releases, surrenders, &c.	...	"	11,912	...	13,638
Registering proprietors	...	"	47	...	30
Other transactions	...	"	11,584	...	13,769
Forms sold	...	"	720	...	635
Fees received	...	£	20,262	...	22,150

Proportion of  
land under  
the Statute.

447. The total quantity of land under the Transfer of Land Statute at the end of 1876 was 6,489,347 acres, the declared value of which, at the time it was placed under the Act, was £15,062,789. The land granted and sold up to the end of 1876 was 10,827,779 acres. It therefore follows that at that period 60 per cent. of the alienated land in the colony was subject to the provisions of this Statute.

Transactions  
in Equity.

448. The transactions in Equity were generally fewer in 1876 than in 1875, as will be seen by the following figures, which show the business done under each head during the two years:—

TRANSACTIONS IN EQUITY, 1875 AND 1876.

	1875.	1876.
Suits by bill ... .. number	72	88
Petitions filed ... .. "	90	52
Other commissions ... .. "	15	8
Decrees issued ... .. "	40	37
Orders issued ... .. "	202	140
Reports issued ... .. "	88	86
Writs of injunction issued ... .. "	10	6
Conveyances settled by Master ... .. "	—	1
Recognizances entered into ... .. "	7	9
Rolls filed ... .. "	35	44

Probates and  
letters of  
administra-  
tion.

449. An increase took place in the number of probates and letters of administration issued in 1876, as compared with that in 1875, but a falling off in the sworn value of the property bequeathed:—

PROBATES AND LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION, 1875 AND 1876.

Year.	Probates.		Letters of Administration.*		Both.	
	Number.	Property sworn under— £	Number.	Property sworn under— £	Number.	Property sworn under— £
1875 ...	711	2,285,728	538	548,234	1,249	2,833,962
1876 ...	770	1,743,332	705	534,125	1,475	2,277,457
Increase	59	...	167	...	226	...
Decrease	...	542,396	...	14,109	...	556,505

Value of  
property  
bequeathed.

450. During the twelve years ended with 1876 the value of the property respecting which probates and letters of administration were issued amounted to over seventeen and a quarter millions sterling (£17,261,576).

Probate  
duties.

451. The amounts realised by the State from duties on estates of deceased persons during the six years ended with 1876 were as follow:—

DUTIES ON ESTATES OF DECEASED PERSONS, 1871 TO 1876.

	£
1871 ... ..	17,069
1872 ... ..	37,643
1873 ... ..	39,026
1874 ... ..	67,998
1875 ... ..	50,057
1876 ... ..	33,638

\* Including those granted to the Curator of Intestate Estates.

452. The following business was done under the head of Divorce and Matrimonial Causes in 1875 and 1876. It will be observed that no decree for judicial separation took place in the latter year; also that the decrees for dissolution of marriage in 1876 were 33 per cent. fewer than those in 1875:—

DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL, 1875 AND 1876.

	1875.	1876.
Petitions for dissolution of marriage ... .. number	20	25
„ judicial separation ... .. „	5	6
„ alimony ... .. „	8	7
Decrees dismissing petitions ... .. „	2	1
„ for dissolution of marriage ... .. „	12	8
„ for judicial separation ... .. „	2	—
„ for alimony ... .. „	1	2

453. The fees in Equity amounted in the aggregate to £1,053 in 1875, and to £961 in 1876; those on Probates amounted to £1,110 in 1875, and to £1,165 in 1876; those in Divorce amounted to £116 in 1875, and to £134 in 1876.

454. The moneys collected in the department of the Master-in-Lunacy increased from £5,619 in 1875 to £8,755 in 1876.

455. The insolvencies were fewer and the amount of both liabilities and assets was less in 1876 than in 1875, but the declared assets, as compared with the declared liabilities, showed a larger deficiency in the year under review than in the former one:—

INSOLVENCIES, 1875 AND 1876.

Year.	Number of Insolvencies.	As shown by the Insolvents' Schedules.		
		Liabilities.	Assets.	Deficiency.
1875 ... ..	773	£ 641,390	£ 389,330	£ 252,060
1876 ... ..	712	551,814	280,962	270,852
Increase ... ..	61	89,576	108,368	18,792
Decrease ... ..				

456. The deficiency, as shown by the insolvents' schedules, amounted to 39 per cent. of the liabilities in 1875, but to as much as 49 per cent. of the liabilities in 1876.

457. The intestate estates, respecting which administration was granted to the Curator, in 1875 numbered 305; those in 1876 numbered 244. The estimated value of such estates amounted to £33,725 in the former, and to £53,243 in the latter year.\* The sums received by the Curator on these estates and on others remaining from former years were £30,149 in 1875, and £55,992 in 1876. In the ten years

\* These numbers and values are included in those given in the table following paragraph 449 ante.

ended with 1876, the number of intestate estates dealt with was 2,312, and their estimated value £300,012. The amount received by the Curator in respect to these estates during the ten years was £256,767.

Offences reported to police, 1876.

458. In the year 1876, the number of offences reported to the Victorian police was 30,008. In respect to 25,281 of these offences, arrests were made; but, in the case of the remaining 4,727, no one had been apprehended up to the end of March 1877.\*

Offences reported, 1875 and 1876.

459. The offences reported to the police in the previous year, according to the *Victorian Year-Book*, 1875,† numbered 29,891, and the arrests, 25,247. Arrests in both 1875 and 1876 were therefore made in respect to between 84 and 85 per cent. of the offences reported.‡

Arrests, 1866, 1871, and 1876.

460. The following table contains a statement of the number of persons arrested and the manner in which they were dealt with by magistrates in 1876, and in each year of the two previous quinquennials.§ According to the manner the returns are made up, a person arrested more than once during the year, or arrested at one time on several charges, is counted as a separate individual in respect to each arrest or charge|| :—

PERSONS ARRESTED, 1866, 1871, AND 1876.¶

	1866.	1871.	1876.
Taken into custody ... ..	24,811	22,800	25,281
Discharged by magistrates ... ..	8,117	6,950	7,750
Summarily convicted or held to bail ...	15,654	15,069	16,851
Committed for trial ... ..	1,040	781	680

Arrests in proportion to population.

461. More arrests, it will be observed, were made at the last period than at any of the others. This, however, does not prove that crime has increased; in fact, in proportion to the number of persons in the

\* It should be pointed out that the offences for which arrests are and are not made are not strictly comparable. They are reckoned in the former case according to the individual arrests effected, in the latter according to the offences reported, although in the perpetration of many of these more than one person may have been concerned.

† Paragraph 250.

‡ It does not follow that in the remaining instances the offender escaped altogether. He may have been arrested on other charges, or for the same offence, after the period at which the returns now published were made up.

§ A statement showing, during a series of years, the numbers taken into custody, the numbers committed for trial, and the numbers convicted after commitment, will be found in the Statistical Summary of Victoria (first folding sheet), *ante*.

|| An attempt has this year been made to show the distinct individuals arrested. See paragraphs 484 to 488 *post*.

¶ This table and the following ones do not include offenders brought before magistrates by summons, who were neither before nor afterwards in the hands of the police. These numbered 24,385 in 1866, 19,150 in 1871, and 17,016 in 1876. The proceedings were generally on account of offences of a lighter nature than those for which arrests were made, viz., offences against Masters and Servants and Wines and Spirits Statutes, breaches of municipal bye-laws, &c. Of the whole number in 1876, only 24 were committed for trial.

colony, arrests were far more numerous at the first period, and slightly more numerous at the middle period, than they were at the last period. The estimated average population in 1866 was 634,077 ; in 1871, 738,725 ; and in 1876, 830,679. The arrests were therefore in the proportion of 1 to every 26 persons living at the first period, of 1 to every 32 persons living at the middle period, and of 1 to every 33 persons living at the third period.

462. The persons summarily convicted, held to bail, or committed for trial, were, to the whole number arrested, in the proportion of 67 per cent. at the first period, of 70 per cent. at the second period, and of 69 per cent. at the third period. Proportions summarily convicted, &c.

463. The diminution in the number of serious offences is shown by the decreasing number of commitments for trial at each successive period. These were in the proportion of 1 to every 24 arrests at the first period, of 1 to every 29 arrests at the middle period, and of 1 to every 37 arrests at the third period. Diminution of serious offences.

464. The sexes of the persons arrested, and of those of them who were discharged by magistrates, were summarily dealt with, or were sent for trial, were as follow at the same three periods :— Males and females arrested.

MALES AND FEMALES ARRESTED,\* 1866, 1871, AND 1876.

	1866.		1871.		1876.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Taken into custody ...	19,866	4,945	18,576	4,224	19,528	5,753
Discharged by magistrates ...	6,509	1,608	5,613	1,337	5,887	1,863
Summarily convicted or held to bail	12,410	3,244	12,258	2,811	13,064	3,787
Committed for trial ...	947	93	705	76	577	103

465. The males and females summarily convicted, held to bail, or committed for trial, were to the whole numbers of the same sexes arrested in the proportions respectively of 67 per cent. and 68 per cent. in 1876 ; and of 70 per cent. and 68 per cent. both in 1871 and 1876. Cases in which charge was sustained.

466. The next table shows the relative proportions of males and females arrested, and of those of them who were discharged, summarily dealt with, or committed for trial at the same three periods. It will be observed that the proportion of females to males in all the groups was greater at the last period than at either of the former periods ; but that at neither period was it anything like equal to the proportion that females bore to males in the total population. At the first period the females in the colony were in the proportion of 78, at the second period of 82, and at the third period of 84 to every 100 males :— Relative proportions of the sexes.

\* See also table following paragraph 484 post.

**MALES AND FEMALES.—RELATIVE PROPORTIONS ARRESTED,  
1866, 1871, AND 1876.**

	Number of Females Arrested to 100 Males.		
	1866.	1871.	1876.
Taken into custody ... ..	24·89	22·74	29·46
Discharged by magistrates ... ..	24·70	23·81	31·64
Summarily convicted or held to bail ... ..	26·14	22·93	28·99
Committed for trial ... ..	9·82	10·78	17·85

Causes of  
arrest.

467. The following is a condensed statement of the offences for which arrests were made, together with the numbers arrested for each offence, in the same three years :—

**CAUSES OF ARREST, 1866, 1871, AND 1876.**

Offence.	1866.	1871.	1876.
Murder and attempt at murder ... ..	36	28	17
Manslaughter ... ..	20	14	17
Shooting at or wounding with intent to do bodily harm	50	54	59
Assaults ... ..	1,238	1,398	1,425
Rape and indecent assaults on females ... ..	70	88	86
Unnatural offence, and assaults with intent to commit	6	18	15
Other offences against the person ... ..	88	130	125
Robbery with violence, burglary, &c. ... ..	262	224	136
Horse, sheep, and cattle stealing, &c. ... ..	272	154	170
Other offences against property ... ..	4,654	3,454	3,458
Forgery and offences against the currency ... ..	110	82	98
Drunkenness ... ..	9,367	9,968	11,624
Other offences against good order ... ..	6,205	5,045	6,085
Offences relating to carrying out laws ... ..	562	672	374
Smuggling and other offences against the revenue	121	101	66
Offences against public welfare ... ..	1,750	1,370	1,526
Total ... ..	24,811	22,800	25,281

Murder, man-  
slaughter,  
&c.

468. Apprehensions for murder and attempts at murder were fewer in 1876 than at either of the other periods, but arrests for manslaughter were more numerous in 1876 than at the second period, and arrests for shooting at or wounding with intent to do bodily harm were more numerous in that year than at either of the other periods.

Sexual  
offences.

469. Rape, indecent assaults, and unnatural offences were the grounds of the greatest number of arrests at the middle period and of the least number at the first period.

Robbery  
with vio-  
lence, &c.

470. Arrests for robbery with violence, burglary, &c., in 1871, outnumbered by upwards of 50 per cent., and in 1866 by nearly 100 per cent., those in 1876.

471. Many more arrests for horse, sheep, and cattle stealing took place at the first period than at either of the subsequent ones, but arrests for offences of this class were slightly more numerous at the last than at the middle period. Cattle stealing, &c.

472. Apprehensions for forgery and offences against the currency bore only a small proportion to the total number of apprehensions at any of the periods. They were highest at the first, and lowest at the middle period. Forgery, &c.

473. Arrests for drunkenness were more numerous in 1876 than in 1871, and more numerous in 1871 than in 1866. The steady increase in the number of apprehensions for this crime may perhaps not be altogether due to its greater prevalence, but partly owing to increased vigilance on the part of the police in apprehending drunken persons. The numbers arrested for this offence in 1876 exceeded those arrested for it in 1875 by only 83. Drunkenness.

474. Smuggling and offences against the revenue have never led to many arrests in Victoria, and notwithstanding the inducement which high import duties might be supposed to offer to smugglers, the numbers falling into the hands of the police are becoming steadily less. The arrests for all offences of this class, in which is included sly grog selling, amounted in 1876 to no more than 66, which is only about two-thirds of the number in 1871, and only about half the number in 1866. Offences against the revenue.

475. The ages of those taken into custody in 1876, and the degree of instruction possessed by them, are shown in the following table :— Age and education of persons arrested.

DEGREE OF INSTRUCTION AND AGE OF PERSONS\* ARRESTED, 1876.

Ages.	Superior Instruction.	Read and Write well.	Read only, or Read and Write imperfectly.	Unable to Read.	Total.
Under 10 years	...	1	56	424	481
10 to 15	...	56	461	187	704
15 to 20	...	407	1,203	231	1,841
20 to 25	10	749	1,662	324	2,745
25 to 30	31	644	1,778	374	2,827
30 to 40	59	1,369	3,845	992	6,265
40 to 50	33	1,120	3,632	1,007	5,792
50 to 60	39	509	1,861	636	3,045
60 years and upwards	2	251	897	402	1,552
Unknown	...	...	28	1	29
Total	174	5,106	15,423	4,578	25,281

476. The returns of those under 15 years of age taken in charge by the police embrace neglected and deserted children as well as criminals. The whole number in 1876, according to the table, was 1,185, and of these not one was possessed of superior instruction, only 57, or about a twentieth, could read and write well, and 611, or more than half, were Education of children arrested.

\* See latter part of paragraph 460 ante, also table following paragraph 484 post.

unable to read. The number of children under 15 committed for trial was 13, of whom 1 was under 10. Only 1 of these could read and write well, and 4 were entirely uneducated.

Education of adults.

477. Those over 15 years arrested numbered 24,096, and of these, 5,223, or more than a fifth (including those possessed of superior instruction), could read and write well, and 3,967, or nearly a sixth, could not read. Those over 15 years of age committed for trial numbered 667, of whom 178, or more than a fourth, could read and write well or were possessed of superior instruction, and 100, or not much above a seventh, were unable to read. According to these figures, the persons charged with offences serious enough to call for their commitment for trial were better educated than the other arrested persons. Those arrested, whether committed for trial or otherwise dealt with, were on the average much worse educated than the general population, for, at the last census, all over 15 years of age, except about a seventh, were returned as being able to read and write, and only a tenth were returned as entirely illiterate.

Birthplaces and religions of criminals.

478. The following table shows the birthplaces and religions of the persons taken into custody and of those committed for trial in 1876, and the ratio of those of each country and sect to the numbers of the same country and sect in the mean population, calculated according to the proportions which prevailed at the last census:—

**BIRTHPLACES AND RELIGIONS OF PERSONS\* ARRESTED AND COMMITTED FOR TRIAL, 1876.**

Birthplace and Religion.	Persons Arrested.		Persons Committed for Trial.	
	Number.	Proportion per 1,000 of the Population.†	Number.	Proportion per 10,000 of the Population.†
<b>BIRTHPLACE.</b>				
Victoria ... ..	4,105‡	10·92	154§	4·10
Other Australian colonies ...	1,069	32·69	42	12·84
England and Wales ...	7,492	38·51	256	13·16
Scotland ... ..	2,587	40·40	54	8·43
Ireland ... ..	8,258	72·05	104	9·07
China ... ..	343	17·01	18	8·93
Other countries ... ..	1,427	...	52	...
Total ... ..	25,281	30·43	680	8·19
<b>RELIGION.</b>				
Protestants ... ..	13,942	23·22	442	7·36
Roman Catholics ... ..	10,689	53·97	186	9·39
Jews ... ..	64	15·45	4	9·66
Pagans ... ..	336	16·52	17	8·36
Others ... ..	250	...	31	...

\* See latter part of paragraph 460 *ante*. See also table following paragraph 484 *post*.

† The estimated population of each birthplace and religion with which these calculations have been made, will be found in the tables following paragraph 34 *ante*.

‡ Including 84 Aborigines.

§ Including 2 Aborigines.



479. It is always found that fewer Victorians are arrested, and fewer are committed for trial, in proportion to their numbers in the population, than persons of any other nationality. This is no doubt mainly due to the fact of a very large proportion of children being embraced within their numbers. The country which supplies the largest number of arrested persons is generally Ireland. In 1876, those arrested of this nationality exceeded the English and Welsh arrested by 766, and this although natives of England and Wales in the population outnumbered the Irish by about 80,000. The offences with which the Irish were charged could not, however, as a whole, have been of so serious a nature as those in respect of which the English were arrested, as the proportion committed for trial was not nearly so great as that of the English. The proportion of natives of Australian colonies, exclusive of Victoria, committed for trial, also exceeded that of the Irish. Next to the Victorians, proportionately to their numbers in the population, fewer Chinese were arrested, and fewer Scotch were committed for trial, than persons of any other nationality. A statement of the offences which formed the grounds of arrest of the members of the respective nationalities will be found in the next table.\*

Relative numbers of each birth-place.

480. In proportion to their numbers in the community, the Roman Catholics supplied more than twice as many arrested persons as the Protestants, and more than three times as many as either the Jews or the Pagans. In view of a similar proportion, fewer Protestants were committed for trial than were members of any of the other sects distinguished. Four Jews were committed for trial during the year, which, as the numbers of this sect in the population are but small, renders the proportion of committals of Jews a fraction higher than that of Roman Catholics. Next to that of Protestants, the smallest proportion of committals was of Pagans. It is, however, to be remarked that the Pagans committed for trial in 1876 were exceptionally few. In the two previous years, in proportion to their respective numbers in the population, they were much more numerous than either the Protestants or the Roman Catholics.

Relative numbers of each religion.

481. The birthplaces of the persons taken into custody are given in the following table, in connection with their offences. It will be observed that no Chinese was arrested during the year for murder, attempt at murder, or manslaughter; also, that only 11 Chinese and 669 Victorians were arrested for drunkenness, whilst the numbers in this group are very heavy in respect to most of the other nationalities:—

Birthplaces compared with offences.

\* I regret that time has not also permitted the preparation of a table showing the grounds of arrest of the members of the respective religious sects. I trust to publish such a table next year.

## CAUSES OF ARREST, AND BIRTHPLACES, 1876.

Offence.	Native Country.							Total.
	Victoria.	Other Australian Colonies.	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.	China.	Other Countries.	
Murder and attempt at murder	5	1	6	...	4	...	1	17
Manslaughter ... ..	...	3	9	1	4	...	...	17
Shooting at or wounding with intent to do bodily harm	11	2	11	6	18	5	6	59
Assaults ... ..	296	78	332	134	478	23	84	1,425
Rape and indecent assaults on females	16	4	31	5	22	3	5	86
Unnatural offence, and assaults with intent to commit	3	1	1	2	3	4	1	15
Other offences against the person	25	8	44	10	29	2	7	125
Robbery with violence, burglary, &c.	45	11	36	6	23	8	7	136
Horse, sheep, and cattle stealing, &c.	69	12	38	10	19	1	21	170
Other offences against property	955	233	978	240	781	110	161	3,458
Forgery and offences against the currency	15	7	40	11	17	...	8	98
Drunkenness ... ..	669	256	3,859	1,499	4,696	11	634	11,624
Other offences against good order	1,200	367	1,654	547	1,875	146	296	6,085
Offences relating to carrying out laws	49	19	136	33	103	7	27	374
Smuggling and other offences against the revenue	3	...	17	12	22	6	6	66
Offences against public welfare	744	67	300	71	164	17	163	1,526
Total ... ..	4,105*	1,069	7,492	2,587	8,258	343	1,427	25,281

Birthplaces of drunkards, &c.

482. Arrests for drunkenness and other offences against good order were in the proportion of 46 per cent. of the total arrests of Victorians, of 58 per cent. of those of natives of the other Australasian colonies, of 74 per cent. of those of English and Welsh, of 79 per cent. of those of Scotch, of 67 per cent. of those of Irish, of 46 per cent. of those of Chinese, and of 65 per cent. of those of natives of other countries.

Occupations of persons arrested.

483. The next table shows the occupations of the males and females taken into custody in 1876. It will be noticed that, of the males, more laborers were arrested than persons of any other calling, and next to them, artisans and mechanics, but that only 17 males have been set down as belonging to the criminal or pauper classes. This group, which includes public prostitutes, contains nearly a third of the arrested females:—

\* Including 84 Aborigines, of whom 7 were arrested for assaults, 6 for miscellaneous offences against property, 65 for drunkenness, and 6 for other offences against good order.

## OCCUPATIONS OF MALES AND FEMALES ARRESTED, 1876.

Occupations.	Males.	Females.
Government officers	3	...
Local government officers	4	...
Others ministering to government, defence, or protection	17	...
Clergy	1	...
Medical men, dentists, druggists, nurses	82	11
Lawyers, law-court officers	23	...
Teachers, governesses	51	9
Architects, civil engineers, surveyors	35	...
Actors, vocalists, musicians	37	...
Authors, editors, reporters	12	...
Artists, sculptors	8	...
Photographers	5	...
Merchants, shopkeepers, dealers	644	38
Bank officials	2	...
Accountants, agents, brokers, collectors	95	...
Commercial clerks	308	...
Others assisting in the exchange of money or goods	29	...
Hotel, boarding, eating-house keepers, servants	142	18
Tailors, shoemakers, dressmakers, hatters, barbers, &c.	1,058	124
Domestic servants	259	638
Contractors, artisans, and mechanics	2,729	...
Miners, &c.	971	...
Squatters, station laborers, herdsmen, and others engaged about animals	366	...
Farmers, gardeners, farm servants	767	...
Carriers, carters, cab, omnibus—owners, drivers, railway officials	584	...
Ships' officers, sailors, boatmen, pier officials, stevedores, lumpers	1,705	...
Butchers, bakers, greengrocers, millers, brewers, dairy-men, and others dealing in food	651	7
Laborers, woodsplitters, bushmen	7,457	...
Rag and bottle gatherers, shoeblacks, nightmen, lamp-lighters, &c.	81	...
Of independent means	4	...
Criminal and pauper classes	17	1,891*
No occupation, unspecified †	1,381	3,017
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,528</b>	<b>5,753</b>

484. It has been already stated‡ that, in making up the tables, a person arrested more than once during the year, or arrested at one time on several charges, is counted as a separate individual in respect to each arrest or charge. By comparing names and other particulars given respecting arrested persons, I have made an attempt, on this occasion for the first time, to ascertain the actual number of individuals who passed into the hands of the police during the year, and the number of offences they were respectively charged with. The results thus obtained, according to sex, age, and birthplace, are embodied in the following table:—

Arrests of distinct individuals.

\* Prostitutes.

† Including 717 male and 377 female children.

‡ See paragraph 460 ante.

## DISTINCT INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED, 1876.

Sex, Age, and Birthplace of Arrested Persons.	Number of charges on which arrests were made.	Number of distinct individuals arrested.	Number of charges on which distinct individuals were arrested.										
			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11 and upwards.*
<b>SEX.</b>													
Males ...	19,528	14,948	12,004	2,029	566	180	87	31	24	10	4	4	9
Females ...	5,753	3,846	2,898	539	201	82	48	35	14	9	3	5	12
Total ...	25,281	18,794	14,902	2,568	767	262	135	66	38	19	7	9	21
<b>AGE.</b>													
Under 10 years ...	481	470	461	8	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 to 15 „ ...	704	629	572	45	9	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...
15 to 20 „ ...	1,841	1,404	1,140	178	46	17	10	5	5	3	...	...	...
20 to 25 „ ...	2,745	2,079	1,633	314	87	23	12	7	1	...	...	1	1
25 to 30 „ ...	2,827	2,110	1,659	316	78	28	16	3	3	3	...	...	4
30 to 40 „ ...	6,265	4,554	3,550	650	203	69	37	17	11	6	1	2	8
40 to 50 „ ...	5,792	4,219	3,294	582	201	70	37	15	9	2	2	4	3
50 to 60 „ ...	3,045	2,182	1,676	328	102	38	12	11	6	4	2	...	3
60 years & upwards	1,552	1,120	892	145	41	15	10	7	3	1	2	2	2
Unknown ...	29	27	25	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
<b>BIRTHPLACE.</b>													
Victoria ...	4,105	3,293†	2,776	361	91	31	17	8	4	2	...	1	2
Other Australasian colonies ...	1,069	774	608	111	26	12	8	4	...	2	...	...	3
England and Wales	7,492	5,675	4,569	737	218	70	39	13	17	1	3	4	4
Scotland ...	2,587	1,822	1,381	286	91	28	15	8	4	3	...	1	5
Ireland ...	8,258	5,780	4,360	886	301	109	56	32	11	11	4	3	7
China ...	343	290	245	38	6	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other countries ...	1,427	1,160	963	149	34	11	...	1	2	...	...	...	...

Manner in which charges are multiplied.

485. In the majority of cases the charges on which individuals are arrested correspond with the number of times they are arrested. It does not, however, always follow that this is the case. Instances not unfrequently occur of an individual being arrested at the same time on two charges, less frequently on three, and occasionally, but not often, on four or even more. This will be made plain by the following examples, which have been extracted from the returns of 1876:—A man was taken into custody for assaulting the police, for tearing a constable's uniform, for habitual drunkenness, and for being drunk and disorderly; another was arrested for neglecting to contribute to the support of his daughter Sarah, his son John, his daughter Jane, and his son Thomas; a third was arrested for assaulting a constable, for tearing a constable's uniform, and for being drunk and disorderly; a fourth was arrested for

Two males and 1 female were arrested on twelve, 1 male and 1 female on thirteen, 1 female on fourteen, 1 female on sixteen, and 1 female on seventeen charges during the year.

† Including 60 Aborigines, of whom 46 were arrested on one, 7 on two, 4 on three, and 3 on four charges during the year.

being drunk, for refusing to produce a railway ticket, and for obstructing a railway porter. In each of these cases the individual, although arrested only once, was the occasion of as many entries being made in the tables of arrested persons as he had offences laid to his charge.

486. It appears that the tendency of females to become arrested over and over again, or at any rate on a variety of charges, is greater than that of males, for, whereas the arrested persons in 1876 were distinct individuals in as many as 77 per cent. of the cases of arrests of males, they were so in only 67 per cent. of the cases of arrests of females; also, whilst only 1 male in every 5 males arrested was charged with more than one offence, the proportion of the other sex was 1 to every 4.

Sexes of those arrested more than once.

487. The persons arrested more than once, or on more than one charge, during the year amounted to only 6 per cent. of those under 15 years of age, to 20 per cent. of those between 15 and 25 and of those over 60 years of age, and to 22 per cent. of those between 25 and 60 years of age.

Ages of those arrested more than once.

488. Sixteen per cent. of the Victorians arrested during the year were taken into custody more than once or on more than one charge, as also were 22 per cent. of the natives of other Australasian colonies, 19 per cent. of the English, 24 per cent. of the Scotch, 25 per cent. of the Irish, and 15 per cent. of the Chinese.

Countries of those arrested more than once.

489. The results of the summary disposal of cases by magistrates in the year 1876 were as follow :—

Results of summary disposal.

SUMMARY DISPOSAL BY MAGISTRATES, 1876.

Sentence.	Males.	Females.
Imprisonment for 2 years ... ..	8	...
"    1 year and under 2 years ... ..	128	48
"    6 months and under 1 year ... ..	221	161
"    4 months ... ..	18	6
"    3 months ... ..	697	389
"    2 months and under 3 months ... ..	199	89
"    1 month and under 2 months ... ..	712	363
"    15 days and under 1 month ... ..	65	6
"    8 days and under 15 days ... ..	524	260
"    7 days and under ... ..	3,524	1,298
Fined ... ..	5,898	637
Ordered to find bail ... ..	277	78
Sent to industrial school or reformatory ... ..	372	277
Otherwise dealt with ... ..	421	175
<b>Total sentenced ... ..</b>	<b>13,064</b>	<b>3,787</b>
<b>Discharged ... ..</b>	<b>5,887</b>	<b>1,863</b>
<b>Total summarily disposed of ... ..</b>	<b>18,951</b>	<b>5,650</b>

Whipping  
ordered by  
magistrates.

490. Corporal punishment may be ordered by magistrates in certain cases, under Statute 35 Vict. No. 399, sec. 33; but only one offender was sentenced by them to be whipped in 1876. This was a man between 30 and 40 years of age, who, in addition to a term of imprisonment, was ordered to receive two whippings of twenty-five lashes each.

Results of  
committals  
for trial.

491. The results of the commitments for trial at the three periods already referred to were as follow:—

#### RESULTS OF COMMITMENTS FOR TRIAL, 1866, 1871, AND 1876.

	1866.	1871.	1876.
Committed for trial ... ..	1,040	781	680
Convicted and sentenced... ..	635	478	334
Acquitted ... ..	326	213	193
Not prosecuted ... ..	79	90	153

Proportion  
of convictions  
obtained.

492. Of those committed for trial in 1866 and 1871 respectively, 961 and 691 were eventually tried. Of those committed for trial in 1876, 527 were tried in the year of their commitment. At the first period 66 per cent., at the second period 69 per cent., and at the third period between 63 and 64 per cent. of the trials resulted in convictions.

Sentences in  
superior  
courts.

493. In addition to the 680 persons committed for trial in 1876, 88 were awaiting trial from the previous year. The total number of those for trial was thus 768; and of these, 384 were convicted, 216 were acquitted, and 168 were not prosecuted for want of evidence, or had not been tried when the year terminated. The following were the sentences of those convicted in 1876:—

#### SENTENCES OF PRISONERS TRIED AND CONVICTED, 1876.

Sentence.	Males.	Females.
Death ... ..	3	1
„ recorded ... ..	1	...
Hard labor for 15 years and upwards ... ..	1	...
„ 10 years and under 15 years ... ..	10	...
„ 7 years and under 10 years ... ..	1	...
„ 4 years and under 7 years ... ..	31	...
Imprisonment for 2 years and under 4 years ... ..	115	8
„ 1 year and under 2 years ... ..	84	18
„ 6 months and under 1 year ... ..	47	7
„ 1 month and under 6 months ... ..	17	16
„ under 1 month ... ..	7	2
„ awaiting the pleasure of the Crown ... ..	1	1
Held to bail ... ..	5	...
Fined ... ..	8	...
Total sentenced... ..	331	53
Acquitted or not prosecuted * ... ..	322	62
Total for trial ... ..	653	115

\* Eighty-one of these—viz., 77 males and 4 females—were awaiting trial at the end of the year.

494. Criminals convicted at the courts of assize and courts of general sessions may for certain offences, described in Acts 27 Vict. No. 253 and 35 Vict. No. 399, be sentenced to corporal punishment in addition to terms of imprisonment. Ten offenders were so sentenced in 1876, viz., 2 to be whipped twice, and 8 three times. The total number of lashes ordered was 742, or an average of 29 at each whipping. Of those who were sentenced to one whipping, 1 was between 10 and 15, and the other between 30 and 40 years of age. Of those sentenced to three whippings, 1 was between 15 and 20; 3 were between 25 and 30; 3 were between 30 and 40; 1 was between 50 and 60; and 1 was upwards of 60 years of age. The last named was ordered only twelve lashes at each whipping.

Whipping ordered by superior courts.

495. In 1876, 3 criminals were executed, of whom 2 were Irish, and 1 was a Swiss. Both the former professed to be members of the Church of England, and the latter to be a Roman Catholic. The crime of the two first was rape, that of the other one murder. Executions have taken place in Victoria in each year since its separation from New South Wales, except 1874. In the twelve years ended with 1876 the total number of executions was 41. Those executed were all males, and no native of Victoria is included in the list. The following table shows their birthplaces, the religions they professed, and the crimes they expiated on the scaffold:—

Executions.

CRIMINALS EXECUTED, 1865 TO 1876.

Birthplace, Religion, and Offence.								Number.
Total number executed								41
Birthplace—Australian colonies, not Victoria								2
„	England	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
„	Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	Ireland	...	...	...	...	...	...	17
„	Scotland	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
„	Belgium	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	France	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	Switzerland	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	United States of America	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	West Indies	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	China	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
„	At sea	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Religion—Church of England...								12
„	Roman Catholic	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
„	Presbyterian	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
„	Wesleyan	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
„	Pagan	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Offence—Murder								36
„	Attempt at murder	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
„	Rape	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
„	Unnatural offence on a child	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

Undetected  
crime.

496. An attempt has been made in 1877, as in 1876, to give a return of the amount of undetected crime which took place during the previous year, the offences being classified as against the person, against property, and others. It does not follow that in all the cases noted the culprit escaped altogether; the returns are made up in the month of April of the year following that in which the offence was reported, and he who committed it might be arrested after that date, or might even before that date be arrested, and perhaps punished for other offences. The following table shows the figures in the two years, those in the latter year being, as will be observed, generally somewhat larger than those in the former:—

UNDETECTED CRIME, 1875 AND 1876.

Year.	Number of Offences.			
	Against the Person.	Against Property.	Other Offences.	Total.
1875 ... ..	321	3,830	493	4,644
1876 ... ..	381	3,968	378	4,727
Increase ...	60	138	...	83
Decrease ...	...	...	115	...

Supreme  
Court  
Criminal  
Sessions.

497. The number of criminal cases tried in the Central Criminal Court, Melbourne, and in the Courts of Assize throughout the colony, in 1876, was 304, of which 230 were for felonies, and 74 for misdemeanors. The convictions for felonies numbered 154, and for misdemeanors 47. The number of places where courts were held was 11, the number of courts held was 37, and the total duration of courts was 90 days.

Supreme  
Court civil  
sittings.

498. Courts were held at the same number of places to try civil cases. The number of causes entered during the year for trial was 230, and for assessment of damages, 1. The number of causes tried was 175, of which 137 were tried by juries of four, and 38 by juries of twelve. All the latter, and all but 1 of the former, were defended. The damages laid in the declarations amounted in the aggregate to £205,664. Verdicts were returned in 159 instances; there were 15 nonsuits, and in 1 case the jury were discharged without giving a verdict. Of the verdicts, 112, or about 70 per cent., were for the plaintiff. The aggregate amount awarded by the juries was £29,347, or 14 per cent. of the damages laid. In the 10 years ended with 1875 the damages sued for in these or similar courts amounted to £2,111,839, and the sums awarded by juries to £544,519, or to about 26 per cent. of the damages sued for.



499. Courts of General Sessions have jurisdiction in criminal cases within certain limitations, and have also appellate jurisdiction in civil cases from petty sessions. The places at which such courts were held in 1876 numbered 29, and the number of courts held, 93, extending over periods amounting in the aggregate to 135 days. The number of cases tried was 292, in 188 of which, or 64 per cent., convictions were obtained. The number of appeals heard was 81. In the 10 years prior to 1876, 3,679 cases were tried in Courts of General Sessions, and 2,398 convictions were obtained; the latter thus were to the former in the proportion of 65 per cent.

Courts of  
General  
Sessions.

500. County Courts have jurisdiction in civil cases up to £250. The number of places at which they were held in 1876 was 58, and the number of courts held was 189, extending over 448 days. The total number of causes tried was 9,405, the amount sued for was £230,237, and the amount recovered, £88,548, or 38 per cent. of the amount sued for. The costs awarded to the plaintiff amounted to £14,845, and the costs awarded to the defendant, to £3,827. During the 10 years prior to the year under review the aggregate amount sued for in County Courts was £2,685,845, and the aggregate amount awarded was £929,135, or 35 per cent of the amount sued for.

County  
Courts.

501. Courts of Mines have jurisdiction concerning all questions or disputes which may arise out of mining on Crown lands. The places at which they were held in 1876 numbered 23, and the courts held numbered 74, occupying 35 days. Very little business was done during the year; the total number of suits being only 17, and the aggregate amount or value of demand, only £759. The amount of costs awarded to the plaintiff was £4, and to the defendant, £83. In the 10 years prior to 1876 the value sued for in Courts of Mines amounted in the aggregate to £986,379.

Courts of  
Mines.

502. Courts of Petty Sessions have jurisdiction in ordinary civil cases up to £20, and in master and servant cases up to £50. Such courts were held at 190 places during the year. The civil cases heard numbered 19,222, in which the total amount of debts or damages claimed was £86,411, and the total amount awarded was £58,419, or 68 per cent. of the amount claimed. In the 10 years ended with 1875, the debts or damages claimed in these courts amounted in all to £1,720,666, and the sums awarded to £931,471, or to 54 per cent. of the amounts claimed.

Courts of  
Petty Ses-  
sions, civil  
cases.

503. The cases of indictable offences heard at Petty Sessions during 1876 numbered 1,561, which resulted in 704 commitments for trial. Commitments were thus obtained in 45 per cent. of the cases. The

Courts of  
Petty Ses-  
sions, in-  
dictable  
offences.

offences summarily dealt with numbered 40,736, in 27,505 of which, or 67 per cent., the offender was convicted.

Writs.

504. Writs were issued in 1876 in six places. The number of writs issued was 1,360, of which 28 were Queen's writs against both person and property, 45 were subjects' writs against the person alone, and 1,287 were subjects' writs against property alone.

Gaols and penal establishments.

505. Places for the reception of prisoners in Victoria are of three kinds: ordinary gaols, police gaols, and penal establishments. The ordinary gaols are both houses of correction and debtors' prisons; the penal establishments are houses of correction only. The police gaols are used for the detention of prisoners sentenced to short periods of imprisonment, or awaiting trial or transfer to some other gaol or penal establishment, or to a lunatic asylum.

Gaols and prisoners.

506. The total and average number of males and females detained in each of these descriptions of prison during 1876, and the numbers transferred from one institution to another in the same year, will be found in the following table:—

## GAOLS AND PENAL ESTABLISHMENTS, 1876.

Description of Prison.	Number of Institutions.	Prisoners detained during the Year.						Prisoners transferred from one institution to another during the Year.		
		Total Number.			Average at One Time.			M.	F.	Total.
		M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.			
Gaols ... ..	9	5,912	2,859	8,771	619	322	941	1,580	505	2,085
Police gaols ... ..	19	841	119	960	25	5	30	173	38	211
Penal establishments	3	1,401	...	1,401	665	...	665	241	...	241
Total ... ..	31	8,154	2,978	11,132	1,309	327	1,636	1,994	543	2,537

Proportion of prisoners to population.

507. Estimating the mean population of the colony during 1876 as 830,679, consisting of 451,134 males and 379,545 females, and comparing these figures with those in the table showing the average number of prisoners, it follows that 1 person to every 508 persons living was constantly in prison during the year; or, distinguishing the sexes, that, during the same period, 1 male to every 345 males living, and 1 female to every 1,161 females living, were constantly in detention.

Prisoners, 1875 and 1876.

508. The number of gaol entries in 1876 ("Total number of prisoners" in last table) was less by 228 than the number in 1875, and the average number of prisoners constantly detained during 1876 was also less by 20 than the corresponding numbers in 1875.

Number of distinct prisoners.

509. According to the report, dated 1st May 1877, of the Acting Inspector-General of Penal Establishments and Gaols, the number of individual prisoners detained during some portion of 1876 in the

institutions under his control amounted to 8,083, viz., 6,129 males and 1,954 females. If the number of individuals in police gaols, estimated to have amounted to 780—viz., 700 males and 80 females—be added to these, the sum, amounting to 8,863—viz., 6,829 males and 2,034 females—will represent, approximately, the number of distinct prisoners detained in all the gaols and penal establishments in the colony during the whole or some part of the year.

510. Comparing these figures with those showing the estimated mean population, it appears that 1 person to every 94 persons in the colony, or 1 male to every 66 males, and 1 female to every 186 females, passed some portion of the year in prison. In this estimate no account is taken of persons lodged temporarily in watchhouses, &c., pending examination before magistrates, the prisoners here referred to being only those detained in regular gaols or penal establishments.

511. The following is a classification of the prisoners in confinement at the end of 1876, according to the grounds in respect to which they were detained :—

GROUND FOR DETENTION OF PRISONERS, 1876.

Grounds for Detention.	Gaols.		Police Gaols.		Penal Establishments.	Total.		
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	M.	F.	Total.
Debt ... ..	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	3
Felony, tried ... ..	246	74	1	1	548	795	75	870
" untried ... ..	18	2	7	1	...	25	3	28
Misdemeanors, tried ... ..	91	44	3	1	46	140	45	185
" untried ... ..	5	4	1	...	...	6	4	10
Other offences ... ..	199	207	10	2	18	227	209	436
Total ... ..	562	331	22	5	612	1,196	336	1,532

512. The cases of sickness in the year (3,309) were in the proportion of 1 to every 2 $\frac{2}{3}$  individual prisoners; but if the calculation be made upon the average number of prisoners detained, the proportion will be 1 prisoner to every 2 cases of sickness.

513. Thirty-two deaths in prison occurred in 1875, and 57 in 1876. These deaths were in the proportion of 1 to every 250 in the former year, and 1 to every 155 in the latter year, of the estimated individual prisoners; and in the proportion of 1 to every 52 in the former year, and 1 to every 29 in the latter year, of the average number of prisoners detained.

514. Three prisoners absconded in 1875, viz., 1 from the penal establishment at Pentridge, and 2 from the penal establishment at Williamstown. Five prisoners absconded in 1876, viz., 1 from the

Melbourne gaol, 1 from the penal establishment at Pentridge, 2 from the penal establishment at Williamstown, and 1 from the penal hulk *Sacramento*.

Ages of  
prisoners.

515. An abstract of the estimated numbers of the population at various ages, of the average number of prisoners at the same ages, and the proportion of the latter to the former, will be found in the following table:—

#### AGES OF PRISONERS, 1876.

Ages.	Estimated Mean Population.*	Average Number of Prisoners constantly detained.	Prisoners per 10,000 of the Population.
Under 10 years ... ..	253,690	9	·35
10 to 15 „ ... ..	97,292	23	2·36
15 to 20 „ ... ..	62,022	149	24·02
20 to 30 „ ... ..	117,829	409	34·71
30 to 40 „ ... ..	135,421	407	30·05
40 to 50 „ ... ..	97,740	364	37·24
50 to 60 „ ... ..	43,760	174	39·76
60 years and upwards ... ..	22,925	101	44·06
Total ... ..	830,679	1,636	19·69

Proportion  
of prisoners  
at various  
ages.

516. From the figures in the above table it may be ascertained that, of persons of both sexes over 15 years of age living in Victoria, 1 to every 299, of those between 20 and 40, 1 to every 310, and of those over 40, 1 to every 257, were constantly in prison throughout the year.

Birthplaces  
and reli-  
gions of  
prisoners.

517. The birthplaces and religions of the prisoners constantly confined during the year, deduced from the total numbers of each nationality and religion returned as passing through the institutions, also the totals of the same nationality and religion in the estimated mean population of the year, are compared in the following table:—

#### BIRTHPLACES AND RELIGIONS OF PRISONERS, 1876.

Native Country and Religion.	Estimated Mean Population.*	Average Number of Prisoners constantly detained.	Prisoners per 10,000 of the Population.
<b>NATIVE COUNTRY.</b>			
Australian colonies... ..	408,596	399	9·77
England and Wales ... ..	194,548	526	27·04
Scotland ... ..	64,034	131	20·46
Ireland ... ..	114,610	445	38·83
China ... ..	20,168	39	19·34
Other countries ... ..	28,723	96	...
Total ... ..	830,679	1,636	19·69
<b>RELIGION.</b>			
Protestants ... ..	600,469	929	15·47
Roman Catholics ... ..	198,067	648	32·72
Jews ... ..	4,142	7	16·90
Pagans ... ..	20,337	39	19·18
Others ... ..	7,664	13	...

\* See table following paragraph 34 ante.

518. It will be observed that, in view of their respective numbers in the population, natives of China and natives of the Australian colonies contributed much less than their share to the number of inmates of prisons, but that natives of England and Wales and of Scotland contributed more, and natives of Ireland contributed much more, than their share to that number. Also that members of all the religious denominations shown, except the Roman Catholics, contributed less than their share, but that the Roman Catholics contributed much more than their share, to the number of such inmates.

Relative numbers of each country and sect.

519. The following cases of punishment for offences committed within the prison took place in 1876. It will be observed that irons, as a means of punishment for such offences, are very rarely used. The "Other punishments" do not include whipping, as corporal punishment is not administered in Victoria for any breach of prison regulations:—

Gaol punishments.

PUNISHMENTS FOR OFFENCES WITHIN PRISONS, 1876.

Nature of Punishment.	Gaols.*			Penal Establishments.	Total.		
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	M.	F.	Total.
Irons ...	1	...	1	2	3	...	3
Solitary confinement ...	483	219	702	334	817	219	1,036
Other punishments ...	154	111	265	808	962	111	1,073
<b>Total ...</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>1,782</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>2,112</b>

520. The punishments for offences within the prison, as detailed in the last table, were in the proportion of 1 to every  $4\frac{1}{2}$  individual prisoners, 1 punishment of a male to every  $3\frac{4}{5}$  individual male prisoners, 1 punishment of a female to every 6 individual female prisoners. The average number of prisoners was in the proportion of 1 to every 1.29 punishments; the average number of male prisoners was in the proportion of 1 to every 1.36 punishments of males; the average number of female prisoners was about equal to the number of punishments of females.

Proportion of prisoners punished.

521. The number of inmates of reformatories during 1876 was 320, viz., 232 males and 88 females. Of these, 124 were admitted, and 101 left during the year. Of the latter, 13 were discharged on remission, and 43 on expiration of sentence; 42 were sent to employment, 1 died, and 2—viz., 1 male and 1 female—absconded and were not retaken. Besides the last named, 4 males absconded and were retaken during the year.

Inmates of reformatories.

\* Including police gaols, in which the only punishment which took place during the year was that of a male, placed in solitary confinement.

Birthplaces  
and reli-  
gions in re-  
formatories.

522. At the end of 1876 the inmates of reformatories numbered 219, of whom all but 8 were known to be Australians by birth. Of the remainder, 2 were natives of England and Wales, 1 of Scotland, 2 of Ireland, and of 3 the birthplace was not known. Of the whole number, 137, or about 63 per cent., were Protestants, and the remainder—viz., 82, or about 37 per cent.—were Roman Catholics.

Ages in re-  
formatories.

523. No inmate of a reformatory at the end of 1876 was under 9 years of age, but 2 inmates were aged 9, 4 aged 10, 20 aged 11, 27 aged 12, 40 aged 13, 42 aged 14, and 84 aged 15 or upwards.

Inquests.

524. The inquests held in 1876 numbered 1,569, as against 1,704 in 1875. In 836 instances the death was found to have resulted from natural causes; in 23 cases, from intemperance; in 635 cases, from violence; in 62 cases, from doubtful causes; and in 13 cases, a verdict of "still-born" was returned. Of the deaths set down to violence, the verdict in 482 cases was to the effect that the death had resulted from accident; in 2 from homicide; in 97 from suicide; in 3 from execution; and in 51 that the cause of the violent death was doubtful. I have pointed out on former occasions that the practice of holding inquests in cases of other than violent deaths was on the increase. This is shown by the increasingly large proportion which verdicts of "death from natural causes" bear to the total number of verdicts given. In 1873, this proportion was 45 per cent.; in 1874, 47 per cent.; in 1875, 52 per cent.; and in 1876, 53 per cent. Inquests in cases of death occurring under suspicious circumstances are held at the discretion of the coroner of the district within which the death takes place, subject to instructions issued by the Governor in Council under the 3rd section of the Coroners Statute 1865 (28 Vict. No. 253).

Fire inquests.

525. Fifteen fire inquests were held during 1876, as against 10 in 1875. Fire inquests are not held now as often as formerly, which is shown by the fact that in the three years ended with 1868 as many as 480 such enquiries were held, but only 235 in the succeeding eight years. This change has occurred, partly because fires have of late years been less numerous than formerly, but chiefly owing to the circumstance that, since the 19th August 1869, at which date the Amending Coroners Statute (33 Vict. No. 338) came into operation, fire inquests have not been held except upon the payment of a fee of £5 5s. by or on behalf of some one applying to have the enquiry made, or in pursuance of authority from the Minister of Justice, which is only given when circumstances appear sufficiently suspicious to warrant action being taken.