

SOCIAL CONDITION.

FROM very early days the Australasian colonies have been regarded somewhat in the light of a working-man's paradise, the high rates of wages which have generally prevailed and the cheapness of food permitting the enjoyment of a great degree of comfort, if not of luxury, by a class which elsewhere knows little of the one and nothing of the other ; and even in these times of trade depression and reduced wages it may safely be said that the position of the wage-earner in Australia is equal to that occupied by him in other parts of the world. Although a high standard of living is not conducive to thrift, saving has gone on with great rapidity, notwithstanding the checks which it has received from time to time from adverse conditions of the labour market. Some idea of the rate and extent of this accumulation of wealth may be obtained from the tables showing the growth of deposits with banks. The banking returns, however, afford in themselves but an incomplete view of the picture ; it should also be regarded from the standpoint of the expenditure of the people. Both of these subjects are dealt with in their proper places in this volume, and these evidences of the social condition of the people need not, therefore, be further considered here.

NEWSPAPERS AND LETTERS

Few things show more plainly the social superiority of a civilized people than a heavy 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 they publish. Great advances have been made in this respect since 1871, and the rate of progress, both in number and in excellence of production, has been even more rapid between 1881 and the present time. There are no means of correctly estimating the number of newspapers actually printed and distributed in the colonies, because the Post-office carries but a small proportion of the circulation. For purposes of comparison with other countries, however, it may be stated that during the year 1894 no less than 96,044,800 newspapers passed through the Post-offices of the various colonies, giving the large proportion of 23 per head of population.

In the same year the number of letters and post-cards carried was 190,919,200, being 46 for every man, woman, and child in Australasia. An examination of the statistics of other countries shows that the people of these colonies stand second among the world's populations in this

respect. The inhabitants of Great Britain have a larger correspondence per head, but the people of no other nation can approach the Australasian figures.

PARKS, MUSEUMS, AND ART GALLERIES.

All the Australasian capitals are liberally supplied with parks and recreation-grounds. In Sydney and suburbs there are parks, squares, and public gardens comprising an area of 3,053 acres, including 530 acres which form the Centennial Park. Then there is the picturesque National Park, of 36,320 acres, situated about 16 miles from the centre of the metropolis; and, in addition to this, an area of 35,300 acres, in the valley of the Hawkesbury, has been recently reserved for public recreation under the name of Ku-ring-gai Chase. Thus Sydney has two extensive and picturesque domains for the enjoyment of the people at almost equal distances north and south from the city, and both accessible by railway. Melbourne has no less than 5,329 acres of recreation-grounds, of which 1,730 acres are within the city boundaries, 2,817 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 provided for in this respect. In all the colonies large areas of land have been dedicated as public parks. There are fine Botanic Gardens in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Hobart, which 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.

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 Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart there are art galleries containing excellent collections of paintings and statuary. All these institutions are open to the public free of charge.

PUBLIC CHARITIES.

One of the most satisfactory features of the social condition of the Australian communities is the wide distribution of wealth, and the consequently small proportion of people who are brought within the reach of want. In the United Kingdom, the richest country of Europe, only nine out of every hundred of the population possess property of the value of £100, while in Australasia the number is not less than thirteen, and the violent contrast between the rich and the poor which blots the civilization of the old world is not observable in these young states. It is, unfortunately, only too plain that a certain amount of poverty does exist in the colonies; but there is a complete absence of an hereditary pauper class, and no one is born into the hopeless con-

ditions which characterize the lives of so many millions in Europe, and from which there is absolutely no possibility of escape. No poor rate is levied in Australasia, the assistance granted by the State being usually tendered to able-bodied men who find themselves out of employment in times of depression, and taking the form of payment, in money or in rations, for work done by them.

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 institutions for the cure of the sick and injured and the amelioration of want. Even where the State 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 charities wholly maintained by private subscriptions, whose efforts for the relief of those whom penury, sickness, or misfortune has afflicted are beyond all praise.

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 second, by sequestering children who have already committed crime, or whose parents or guardians find themselves unable to control them.

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 rural districts of the colonies, and they are accordingly found in every important country town. Below will be found the number of hospitals in each colony, with the number of indoor patients treated during 1894–5, and the total expenditure for the same year. Unfortunately, the South Australian and Western Australian returns are defective, as will be seen by the notes appended to the table:—

Colony.	Hospitals.	Indoor patients treated.	Expenditure.
	No.	No.	£
New South Wales	110	23,582	112,793
Victoria	41	19,408	98,240
Queensland	55	13,479	85,749
South Australia.....	13	*2,545	14,013
Western Australia.....	18	†873	12,528
Tasmania	10	2,361	14,091
New Zealand ..	40	10,157	91,169
Australasia	287	72,405	428,583

* Adelaide Hospital only.

† Patients treated in 11 hospitals.

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 from which these unfortunate people suffer.

The following table shows the number of insane patients remaining in the asylums of each colony on the 31st December, 1894, and the expenditure on hospitals for the insane during the year. The question of insanity is treated farther on in this chapter :—

Colony.	Insane Patients.	Expenditure.
	No.	£
New South Wales	3,587	84,953
Victoria	4,116	88,674
Queensland	1,340	31,853
South Australia	893	23,064
Western Australia	148	4,988
Tasmania	367	11,178
New Zealand	2,168	45,221
Australasia	12,619	289,931

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 are given in the following table, together with the number of inmates of the various asylums at the end of 1894, except in the case of Victoria, for which colony the returns are made out to the 30th June of that year :—

Colony.	Inmates.	Expenditure.
	No.	£
New South Wales	7,609	176,235
Victoria	4,152	93,202
Queensland	1,837	46,443
South Australia	1,453	30,399
Western Australia	456	10,700
Tasmania	837	14,721
New Zealand	1,051	86,555
Australasia	17,395	458,255

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. The expenditure of the Governments of the Australasian colonies in connection with all forms of relief and in aid of hospitals and other charitable institutions, so far as is shown by the imperfect returns, amounted in 1894 to about £600,000; adding to this the amount of private subscriptions, the

poor and the unfortunate have benefited during the year to the extent of over £1,000,000. 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.

CRIME.

In all the colonies proceedings against a person accused of an offence may be initiated either by the arrest of the culprit or by summoning him to appear before a magistrate. Serious offences, of course, are rarely dealt with by process of summons ; but, on the other hand, it is not uncommon for a person to be apprehended on a very trivial charge, and this circumstance should not be forgotten in dealing with arrests by the police, which are unusually numerous in some of the colonies. Unfortunately, it is not easy to say how far the police of one colony are disposed to treat offenders with such consideration as to proceed against them by summons, and how far those of another colony are content to adopt similar action ; for in most of the provinces the records do not draw a distinction between the two classes of cases ; and in the table given below, showing the number of persons charged before magistrates in each colony during the year 1894, offenders who were summoned to appear are included with those arrested. It is likewise difficult to make a true comparison between the various colonies in the matter of the prevalence of crime, for there are a number of circumstances which must considerably affect the criminal returns and modify their meaning. The first of these, of course, is the question of the strength of the police force and its ability to cope with lawlessness, which must be decided chiefly by the proportion of undetected crime which takes place in the colonies, and for such a comparison no data are published except by Victoria. The policy adopted by the chief of police in regard to trivial breaches of the public peace and other minor offences against good order must also be taken into consideration ; and then there are considerable differences between the criminal codes of the colonies, and in the number of local enactments, breaches of which form a large proportion of the minor offences taken before the Courts. Also, when the returns of the lower Courts are laid aside and the convictions in superior Courts taken up, the comparison is affected by the jurisdiction of the magistrates who committed the prisoners. In New South Wales, for example, the jurisdiction of the lower Courts is limited to imprisonment for six months, except in regard to cases brought under one or two Acts of Parliament, such as the Chinese Restriction Act, prosecutions under which are very few ; while in Victoria a large number of persons are every year sentenced in

Magistrates' Courts to imprisonment for terms ranging from six months to three years. It is apparent, therefore, that in any comparison drawn between the number of convictions in the superior Courts of New South Wales and of Victoria, the former colony must appear to great disadvantage.

An investigation into the differences between the law of New South Wales and of Victoria in respect to the jurisdiction of magistrates discloses some important results. Under the Victorian Crimes Act of 1890, 54 *Victoriæ* No. 1,079, it is provided by section 67 that Justices may try persons under sixteen years of age for the offence of simple larceny or for any offence punishable as simple larceny no matter what the value of the property in question may be, and persons over sixteen years of age where the property said to have been stolen is not of greater value than £2; and it is further provided by the same section that if upon the hearing of such a charge the Justices shall be of opinion that there are circumstances in the case which render it inexpedient to inflict any punishment, they shall have power to dismiss the charge without proceeding to a conviction. This provision, it is needless to say, is likely to materially reduce the number of convictions for larceny in Victoria. In New South Wales, on the other hand, the law does not give Justices any such power. In every case where the offence is proved they must convict the accused person, although in the case of offenders under the age of sixteen years they may discharge the convicted person on his making restitution, or in other cases deal with him under the First Offenders' Act and suspend the sentence; but in all such cases the conviction is placed on record and is accounted for in the criminal statistics of the colony. Section 69 of the same Victorian Act gives Justices power to deal with any case of simple larceny, or of larceny as a clerk or servant, or of stealing from the person, when the accused pleads guilty, the punishment being imprisonment for any term not exceeding twelve months; while in New South Wales the law does not give Justices the power to deal with such cases when the property alleged to have been stolen exceeds the value of £20. This section must therefore tend to materially reduce the number of cases committed for trial in Victoria for the offences mentioned, although in all such cases the Justices may commit the accused person if they think fit to do so. Furthermore, it is provided by section 370 of the Crimes Act of 1890 that suspected persons who have been convicted of capital or transportable felony elsewhere and are found in Victoria may be arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for three years in the case of a male, and for one year in the case of a female. Such a protective provision is in force in some of the other provinces as well as in Victoria, and its absence in New South Wales has made that colony the chosen refuge of many of the criminals of the other colonies; for there they may lay their plots in peace and enjoy immunity from arrest until the police discover some proof of their complicity in fresh crime or can charge them

with being in possession of property which may reasonably be regarded as having been stolen. It is not, however, only in respect to serious offences that the law of Victoria differs from that of New South Wales, for under the Victorian Police Offences Act of 1890 drunkenness in itself is no crime, and must be allied with disorderly conduct before the person may be punished. These statements all go to show in what important respects the criminal statistics of the colonies must differ from each other. To make a thorough investigation into the provisions of the law in each of the provinces, with the object of placing the statistics on a fairly comparable basis, is a task involving much labour, and an opportunity for undertaking it has not yet presented itself, although it is hoped that the work may soon be taken in hand.

During the year 1894, as far as can be gathered, 154,237 persons were charged before magistrates in Australasia, 111,873 being summarily convicted and 38,656 discharged, while 3,708 were committed. The returns of each of the seven colonies will be found below. It should be explained that in the case of New Zealand each charge is counted as a separate person—a proceeding which, of course, tells against the colony; in the case of Tasmania persons charged as being of unsound mind are excluded from the returns; while the figures for Victoria are made up of 24,846 persons apprehended by the police, and 14,423 distinct offences for which persons were summoned, and it is possible that the actual number of people summoned to appear before the courts was somewhat less than this latter figure:—

Colony.	Persons charged.	Summarily dealt with.		Committed.
		Discharged.	Convicted.	
New South Wales.....	61,930	14,227	46,210	1,493
Victoria	39,269	11,495	27,118	656
Queensland.....	15,945	3,653	11,808	484
South Australia.....	7,636	1,438	5,977	221
Western Australia ...	7,152	2,600	4,403	149
Tasmania	4,954	1,117	3,744	93
New Zealand	17,351	4,126	12,613	612
Australasia.....	154,237	38,656	111,873	3,708

Taking the whole of Australasia, nearly thirty-eight persons out of every thousand were charged before magistrates during the year 1894. Only two colonies—Western Australia and New South Wales—exceed the average amount of disorder and crime as disclosed by the police court returns. The very large proportion of adult males to the population of the former colony, and its present industrial conditions, place it, of course, in quite an exceptional position; while in New South Wales there is a much greater floating population, from the ranks of which a

large percentage of offenders is drawn, than in any of the other colonies which have a better record. The province with the least disorder and crime is South Australia, where the persons answering to charges in the lower Courts only form 21·84 per thousand of the population, and this position is maintained by the colony when the question is approached from the standpoint of convictions for serious offences. Next come New Zealand with 25·55 per thousand ; Tasmania, with 31·76 ; Victoria, with 33·38 ; and Queensland, with 36·34 ; while, as before stated, New South Wales and Western Australia have the highest proportions, namely, 50·05 and 97·22 per thousand respectively. In the case of New Zealand, it must be pointed out that the Maori offenders, of whom there were 452 (321 of whom were convicted, 101 discharged, and 30 committed), have not been included in the figures for that colony. The following table shows the proportion of persons charged before magistrates in each colony during the year ; also the percentages of the persons discharged, convicted, and committed to the whole number charged :—

Colony.	Persons charged per 1000 of population.	Percentages of total persons charged.			
		Discharged.	Convicted.	Summarily dealt with.	Committed.
New South Wales	50·05	22·97	74·62	97·59	2·41
Victoria	33·38	29·27	69·06	98·33	1·67
Queensland	36·34	22·91	74·05	96·96	3·04
South Australia	21·84	18·83	78·27	97·10	2·90
Western Australia	97·22	36·36	61·56	97·92	2·08
Tasmania	31·76	22·55	75·57	98·12	1·88
New Zealand	25·55	23·78	72·69	96·47	3·53
Australasia	37·52	25·06	72·53	97·59	2·41

It will be seen from the above table that out of every hundred persons charged before magistrates in Australasia in 1894, 97·59 were summarily dealt with, 25·06 being discharged and 72·53 convicted, while only 2·41 were committed to higher courts. The colony with the highest percentage of cases summarily disposed of and the smallest proportion of committals was Victoria, where, as has already been pointed out, magistrates have a much wider jurisdiction than in New South Wales and some of the other colonies. The extent to which the comparison is affected by this fact is partly shown by the punishments inflicted by the Victorian magistracy during 1894, 2 persons being sentenced to three years' imprisonment, 27 persons to two years, 297 to periods between one year and two years, and 326 to terms of six months and under one year. Many of these persons, had they been tried in New South Wales, would have been convicted in higher courts. Another important point to be noted is that, next to Western Australia, Victoria has

the largest proportion of discharges, and if the theory be dismissed as untenable that the police in this colony are more prone to charge persons on insufficient grounds than in the other colonies, it must be concluded that the magistrates of Victoria deal more leniently with accused persons than is the case elsewhere; indeed, it has already been shown that the Crimes Act of 1890 provides for the discharge without conviction of persons found guilty of certain offences. The lowest proportion of discharges is to be found in South Australia, which also has the highest percentage of summary convictions. In South Australia, however, as well as in Tasmania, there are no intermediate courts such as exist in New South Wales and some of the other provinces. They should, therefore, show a high percentage of summary convictions, and this will be found to be the case.

Of the 154,237 persons brought before magistrates during the year 1894 only 18·4 per cent. were charged with offences which can fairly be classed as criminal, the overwhelming majority being accused of drunkenness and other offences against good order, lunacy, vagrancy, and breaches of Acts of Parliament, which have a tendency to multiply to a great extent. For present purposes the accused persons may be divided as in the table given below, offences against the person and against property being regarded as serious crime. Of course, amongst the other offenders are to be found a few charged with grave misdemeanours, but against these may be put trivial assaults, which are included with crimes against the person :—

Colony.	All Offenders.	Serious Offenders.			Minor Offenders.
		Against the Person.	Against Property.	Total.	
New South Wales	61,930	3,311	6,810	10,121	51,809
Victoria	39,269	2,243	3,775	6,018	33,251
Queensland	15,945	2,192	2,090	4,282	11,663
South Australia	7,636	172	1,062	1,234	6,402
Western Australia	7,152	584	954	1,538	5,614
Tasmania	4,954	388	888	1,276	3,678
New Zealand	17,351	1,429	2,484	3,913	13,438
Australasia.....	154,237	10,319	18,063	28,382	125,855

This examination into the nature of the offences explains in some measure the comparatively unfavourable position of New South Wales as shown by the previous tables. Of the 61,930 accused persons in that colony, the minor offenders numbered 51,809, or 83·7 per cent., equal to the proportion of South Australia, and much higher than that of any other colony except Victoria. The higher proportion of arrests in New South Wales is probably accounted for by the greater strictness of police

administration. Victoria actually shows 84·7 per cent. of minor offenders, but in consequence of a difference in the tabulation of the returns its position is not nearly so favourable as it appears to be on the surface. In New South Wales, and, it is to be presumed, in most of the other colonies, a person accused of two or more offences is entered as charged with the most serious in the eyes of the law, while in Victoria he is entered as charged with the first offence committed, any others, however serious, arising out of his capture, being left out of consideration. For example, if a person is arrested for drunkenness, and he assaults his captors while on the way to the station, he is entered in the returns of New South Wales, as they are here presented, as charged with an offence against the person, and thereby helps to swell the amount of serious crime; but in Victoria he is entered as charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct, and the charge of assault, on which he may be convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment, is not disclosed. This fact must therefore be taken into account in comparing the proportions of the various classes of offenders per thousand of population, which are appended :—

Colony.	Per thousand of population.				
	All Offenders.	Serious Offenders.			Minor Offenders.
		Against the Person.	Against Property.	Total.	
New South Wales	50·05	2·68	5·50	8·18	41·87
Victoria	33·38	1·91	3·21	5·12	28·26
Queensland	36·34	5·00	4·76	9·76	26·58
South Australia	21·84	0·49	3·04	3·53	18·31
Western Australia	97·22	7·94	12·97	20·91	76·31
Tasmania	31·76	2·49	5·69	8·18	23·58
New Zealand	25·55	2·10	3·66	5·76	19·79
Australasia.....	37·52	2·51	4·40	6·91	30·61

It will be seen that, relatively to population, the colony with the largest number of serious offenders was Western Australia, which had a proportion of 20·91 per thousand of population. Queensland followed with a proportion of 9·76, while Tasmania and New South Wales occupied third and fourth positions with 8·18 each, the former having the largest proportion of offences against property, and the latter against the person. The rate of New Zealand was 5·76 per thousand, while that of Victoria is set down at 5·12, and South Australia closes the list with 3·53. It would be interesting to compare the crime of the principal colonies on the basis of the number of males of such ages as contribute to the ranks of offenders; but this cannot accurately be done at the present time, in consequence of the changes

which have taken place in the composition of the people since the last census. The exodus from some of the eastern colonies has brought about a decrease in crime, but their gain has been Western Australia's detriment.

About one-third of the minor offenders of Australasia are charged with drunkenness. From the table given below it will be seen that in all the colonies 44,701 cases of drunkenness were heard during the year 1894, convictions being recorded in 38,660 cases, or 86·3 per cent. of the total number. The colony with the highest number of cases relatively to population was Western Australia, the rate of which was 24·2 per thousand persons, followed by New South Wales with 15·8, Victoria with 9·6, and Queensland with 8·9, while Tasmania was last with a rate of only 3·6 per thousand. The figures for Victoria, however, only refer to apprehensions, information respecting persons summoned to answer a charge of drunkenness not being available, while, as already pointed out, drunkenness in itself is not a crime in that colony, but must be aggravated by disorderly conduct. When the number of convictions is considered it will be noticed that the magistrates of Western Australia and Victoria take a somewhat lenient view of this offence, and only record convictions in about 62 and 64 per cent. of the cases respectively, while in the other colonies the percentage ranges from 94·3 to 99·4 :—

Colony.	Charges of Drunkenness.	Convictions.		Per 1,000 persons.	
		Total.	Percentage of Charges.	Charges.	Convictions
New South Wales	20,145	18,997	94·3	15·8	15·4
Victoria	11,357	7,353	64·7	9·6	6·2
Queensland	3,902	3,878	99·4	8·9	8·8
South Australia.....	2,370	2,283	96·3	6·8	6·5
Western Australia	1,779	1,117	62·8	24·2	15·2
Tasmania	565	539	95·4	3·6	3·5
New Zealand	4,583	4,493	98·0	6·7	6·6
Australasia	44,701	38,660	86·3	10·9	9·4

But a return showing only the number of cases of drunkenness is not a safe index of 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 of the habits of communities living under like conditions; but comparisons so based

should not be pushed to extremes, for, as 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. The average quantity of intoxicants used in each colony during 1894 is given below, wines and beer being reduced to their equivalent of proof spirit. The consumption of the various kinds of intoxicants will be found in the chapter on "Food Supply and Cost of Living":—

Colony.	Proof Gallons of Alcohol per head of population.
New South Wales	2·17
Victoria	2·39
Queensland	2·19
South Australia	2·00
Western Australia	3·07
Tasmania	1·30
New Zealand	1·55
Australasia	2·09

These figures show the importance which must be attached to police administration when studying the question of drunkenness. The strength of the police force in each of the colonies at the end of 1894 is given below :—

Colony.	Police.			Inhabitants to each Police Officer.	Area to each Constable in Country Districts.
	Metropolitan.	Country.	Total.		
	No.	No.	No.	No.	Sq. miles.
New South Wales	731	1,088	1,819	688	281
Victoria	740	672	1,412	835	130
Queensland	196	722	918	485	926
South Australia	207	159	366	963	5,682*
Western Australia	72	211	283	290	4,625
Tasmania	64	213	277	568	141
New Zealand	49	432	481	1,426	242

* Including Northern Territory.

The record of cases heard before a Court of Magistrates cannot be regarded as altogether a trustworthy indication of the social progress of Australasia, because, as has been pointed out, 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 committals for trial, 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, as already shown, 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, for example, are tried by a jury are in some of the other provinces dealt with by magistrates, and even in Victoria, where there are Courts of General Sessions, magistrates have a much wider jurisdiction than in New South Wales. But for the purpose of showing the decrease in serious crime in Australasia as a whole the proportion of committals and of convictions in Superior Courts may fairly be taken, and this information is given below. It will be seen that during the thirty-three years from 1861 to 1894 the rate of committals per thousand of population has dropped from 2·2 to 0·9, and of convictions from 1·3 to 0·5 :—

Year.	Per 1,000 of Population.	
	Committals.	Convictions in Superior Courts.
1861	2·2	1·3
1871	1·4	0·8
1881	1·2	0·7
1891	1·1	0·6
1894	0·9	0·5

In noting these facts and comparing the results with those 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 not unreasonably be 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.

Below will be found the number of convictions in the Superior Courts of each colony, at decennial periods from 1861 to 1891, as well as for the year 1894 :—

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1894.
New South Wales	437	628	1,066	964	892
Victoria	846	511	332	729	435
Queensland.....	24	91	92	232	226
South Australia	62	91	213	90	131
Western Australia	35	65	61	44	84
Tasmania	127	74	51	63	42
New Zealand.....	100	162	270	276	300
Australasia.....	1,631	1,622	2,085	2,398	2,110

The following table gives a classification of the offences for which the accused persons were convicted during 1894; also the rate of convictions and of committals per 1,000 of population. It will be seen that the rate of convictions in the Superior Courts of Victoria is 0·37 per thousand; but if the persons who received sentences of over six months' imprisonment at the hands of magistrates be taken into account, the proportion would be about equal to that of New South Wales. The colonies of Tasmania and South Australia have, with Victoria, the smallest proportions of convictions in Superior Courts, but there, as already pointed out, no intermediate Courts exist:—

Colony.	Convictions in Superior Courts.					Committals per 1,000 of Population.
	Classification of Offences.			All Convictions.	Per 1,000 of Population.	
	Against the Person.	Against Property.	Other.			
New South Wales	135	665	92	892	0·72	1·21
Victoria	98	324	13	435	0·37	0·56
Queensland	61	142	23	226	0·52	1·10
South Australia	27	103	1	131	0·37	0·63
Western Australia.....	29	54	1	84	1·14	2·03
Tasmania.....	14	23	5	42	0·27	0·60
New Zealand	36	199	65	300	0·44	0·90
Australasia	400	1,510	200	2,110	0·51	0·90

There is no doubt that New South Wales would appear to much greater advantage in a comparison of crime statistics if there existed in that colony any law preventing the entrance of criminals, such as is rigidly enforced in most of the other provinces. In the absence of such a protective measure, the mother colony has become a happy hunting-ground for the desperadoes of Australasia. That there is ground for this assertion is shown by the fact that whereas in New South Wales offenders born in the colony only formed 37 per cent. of the total apprehensions in 1894, in Victoria 43 per cent. of arrested persons were of local birth; while at the census of 1891 the element of the population of local birth was larger in the former than in the latter colony.

The punishment of death is very seldom resorted to except in cases of murder, though formerly such was not the case. Thus the number of executions has steadily fallen from 151 during the decade 1841–50 to 66 during the ten years 1881–90. In South Australia the extreme penalty has been most sparingly inflicted, there having been only 9 executions in the twenty-four years which closed with 1894. The following table shows the number of executions in each province during each decade of the 50 years ended 1890, also those which took place in

1891-93 and 1894. Queensland was incorporated with New South Wales until the end of 1859, though Victoria became a separate colony in 1851. It will be noticed that the returns are defective so far as Western Australia is concerned :—

Colony.	1841-50.	1851-60.	1861-70.	1871-80.	1881-90.	1891-93.	1894.
New South Wales...	68	38	34	27	23	9	5
Queensland.....			14	18	15	6	5
Victoria			41	19	13	9	1
South Australia.....	.....	7	12	6	2	1	...
Western Australia..	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6	...
Tasmania	83	32	15	3	5	1	...
New Zealand.....	.....	.....	.....	12	8	.....	...
Total	151	124	116	85	66	32	11

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. The number and classification of prisoners in confinement on the 31st December, 1894, were as follow :—

Colony.	Tried and Sentenced.	Awaiting Trial.	Debtors.	Total.
New South Wales.....	2,469	133	8	2,610
Queensland	499	47	.....	546
South Australia	255*	10	.....	265
New Zealand.....	483	70	2	555
Total	3,706	260	10	3,976

* Including debtors.

The returns of Victoria and Tasmania give the total number of prisoners in confinement on the 31st December, 1894, as 1,463 and 173 respectively, while Western Australia records a daily average of 389. Taking the figure just mentioned to be correct for the end of the year, there was a prison population in Australasia of 6,001, or about 1·5 in every thousand of the population.

SUICIDES.

Suicides would unfortunately appear to be increasing in proportion to population, as well as in actual number, since 1871. It is believed that the actual number of suicides is even larger than is shown in the tables, especially during recent years. There is a growing disposition on the part of coroner's juries to attribute to accident what is really the result of an impulse of self-destruction. The following table indicates a portion of the past history and present position of the colonies in this respect :—

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1894.	Average 10 years. 1885-94.	
New South Wales	45	30	83	119	108	115	
Victoria	64	90	102	119	116	123	
Queensland	*	8	30	73	76	62	
South Australia	13	11	34	31	34	30	
Western Australia	1	*	4	6	17	8	
Tasmania	7	4	6	9	14	10	
New Zealand.....	*	*	42	56	73	58	
Australasia {	Total	130	143	301	413	438	406
	Per 100,000 of popu- lation	13.0	8.4	10.9	10.6	10.7	11.0

* Information not available.

Compared with the total number of deaths and the mean population, suicides in the Australasian colonies during the last ten years (1885-94) show the following proportions per 100,000 :—

Colony.	Per 100,000 Deaths.	Per 100,000 Inhabitants.
New South Wales	773	10.6
Victoria	744	11.5
Queensland	1,108	16.1
South Australia	749	9.4
Western Australia	1,044	16.7
Tasmania	473	6.9
New Zealand	928	9.4
Australasia	810	11.0

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 England, where deaths by suicide average only 8 per 100,000 of population. Compared with the rates of some European countries, however, that of Australasia is small, for during the period 1887-91 the average number of suicides per 100,000 of population was, in Denmark, 25·3; in France, 21·8; in Switzerland, 21·6; Prussia, 19·7; Austria, 15·9; Belgium, 12·2; Sweden, 11·9; Bavaria, 11·8; England, 8·0; Norway, 6·6; Holland, 5·8; Scotland, 5·6; Italy, 5·2; and Ireland, 2·4. It is the general experience that suicide is increasing.

ILLEGITIMACY.

The following figures show the number of births of illegitimate children and the total births for the years 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1894.

Colony.	1871.		1881.		1891.		1894.	
	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.
New South Wales...	782	20,143	1,263	28,993	2,115	39,458	2,437	38,951
Victoria	747	27,382	1,382	27,145	2,064	38,505	1,886	34,258
Queensland	156	5,205	345	8,220	684	14,715	632	13,977
South Australia	*	7,082	*	10,708	315	10,737	320	10,499
Western Australia...	*	760	*	1,005	*	1,786	99	2,123
Tasmania.....	*	3,053	*	3,918	185	4,971	247	4,852
New Zealand	*	10,592	534	18,732	638	18,273	704	18,528
Australasia	1,685	74,217	3,524	98,721	6,001	128,445	6,325	123,188
Per cent. of births...	3·19	.....	4·24	.....	4·74	.....	5·10	.....

* Information not available.

Illegitimacy is increasing in Australasia, as is shown by the table just given, and the ratio to the total births is now higher than in England, where the percentage of illegitimate births has steadily declined during the last fifty years. The following are the average annual percentages of

illegitimate births to total births, calculated over a series of years, for the Australasian colonies and the United Kingdom :—

	Illegitimate Births per cent.
New South Wales.....	5·74
Victoria	5·04
Queensland	4·80
South Australia.....	2·51
Western Australia	4·25
Tasmania.....	4·15
New Zealand	3·24
Australasia.....	4·81
England	4·33
Ireland	2·66
Scotland	7·56
United Kingdom	4·53

DIVORCE.

The question of divorce is one of much interest to Australasia, the more so because for some years past some of the colonies have offered great facilities for the dissolution of the marriage bond. The general opinion has been that such facilities were calculated to increase divorce to an extent that would prove hurtful to public morals, and so far as the experience of New South Wales goes, the fear does not seem to be groundless, although in Victoria, where a somewhat similar law prevails, there has not been the alarming increase in divorces which has placed New South Wales at the head of all the British Colonies in this respect.

In New South Wales, under the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1873, the chief grounds on which divorce was granted were adultery after marriage on the part of the wife, and adultery with cruelty on the part of the husband. A measure, however, was passed through both Houses of the Legislature in 1892, and came into force in August of that year, which in the main assimilated the law to that of Victoria. Under this Act and an Amending Act passed in 1893 petitions for divorce can be granted for the following causes, in addition to those already mentioned:—*Husband v. Wife*.—Desertion for not less than three years; habitual drunkenness for a similar period; being imprisoned under a sentence for three years or upwards; attempt to murder or inflict grievous bodily harm, or repeated assault on the husband within a year preceding the date of the filing of the petition. *Wife v. Husband*.—Adultery, provided that at the time of the institution of the suit the husband is domiciled in New South Wales; desertion for not less than three years; habitual drunkenness for a similar period; being imprisoned for three years or upwards, or having within five years undergone various sentences amounting in all to not less than three years; attempt to murder or assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, or repeated assault within one year previously. To entitle either party to seek relief on

any of these grounds he or she must have been domiciled in the colony for three years or upwards at the time of instituting the suit, and must not have resorted to the colony for the purpose of having the marriage dissolved. 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 of dissolution of marriage and judicial separation granted in each colony, in quinquennial periods since 1867, as far as it is possible to procure the information. Divorce was legalised in New South Wales in 1873, and in Queensland in 1870, so that no figures for those colonies appear in the first quinquennial period. The totals for all except the last two periods are exclusive of decrees granted in New Zealand :—

Colony.	1867-70.		1871-75.		1876-80.		1881-85.		1886-90.		1891-94.	
	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.
New South Wales .....	...	...	21	...	87	...	112	6	210	12	841	45
Victoria	31	8	33	6	41	2	74	8	124	9	356	10
Queensland .....	...	...	4	1	14	...	5	2	26	3	22	3
South Australia	7	1	22	3	35	2	31	10	23	2	25	2
Western Australia	6	2	...	...	1	1	5	...	8	...	7	...
Tasmania	1	1	9	...	9	...	9	...	15	2	17	1
New Zealand	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	*...	110	5	83	9
Australasia	45	12	89	10	187	5	236	26	516	33	1351	70

* Information not available.

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 shows the number of divorces per 10,000 marriages in each province :—

Colony.	1867-70.	1871-75.	1876-80.	1881-85.	1886-90.	1891-94.
New South Wales .....	...	†23·5	33·6	31·3	54·3	263·7
Victoria	20·9	16·0	16·9	24·4	31·1	116·6
Queensland .....	...	8·0	18·7	6·0	19·0	20·6
South Australia	15·6	33·5	34·6	33·1	24·3	28·9
Western Australia	117·8	...	20·5	44·8	53·5	41·2
Tasmania	7·8	27·4	22·0	18·0	35·4	46·2
New Zealand	*...	*...	*...	*...	63·5	51·6

* Information not available.

† 1874 and 1875 only.

INCREASE IN DIVORCES.

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In the subjoined table will be found the figures for each of the years 1888-94, from which it will be seen that, taking the colonies as a whole, divorce is decidedly increasing :—

Colony.	1888.		1889.		1890.		1891.		1892.		1893.		1894.	
	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.
New South Wales	41	2	56	4	55	4	66	7	102	11	304	9	369	18
Victoria	28	1	22	3	40	..	99	..	91	1	85	7	81	2
Queensland	6	..	11	..	8	2	5	1	6	..	5	2	6	..
South Australia	2	..	6	..	2	..	5	..	7	..	8	1	5	1
Western Australia	2	..	1	..	3	..	4	..	1	..	1	..	1	..
Tasmania	4	..	3	1	2	..	3	..	3	1	6	..	5	..
New Zealand	32	..	17	1	21	3	20	3	18	1	25	1	20	4
Australasia	115	3	116	9	131	9	202	11	228	14	434	20	487	25
Totals	118		125		140		213		242		454		512	
Number of marriages	27,000		26,810		27,525		27,663		26,047		24,742		24,798	
Divorces and separations per 10,000 marriages	43·7		46·6		50·9		77·0		81·8		183·5		206·5	

The proportion of divorces to 10,000 marriages in Australasia is very much higher than in other countries, except Denmark, the United States, and Switzerland, as will be seen by the following statement, which includes judicial separations, as well as divorces :—

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

INSANITY.

The number of insane persons under official cognizance in Australasia on the 31st December, 1894, was 12,619. This represents 3·0 per thousand of the population. The rates in the United Kingdom for the last recorded period were—England, 2·9; Scotland, 2·6; and Ireland, 3·2. The amount of insanity in Australasia is, therefore, higher than in England or in Scotland. The following table shows the proportion of lunacy in each of the colonies at the end of 1894, from which it will appear that the greatest proportion is to be found in Victoria, and the smallest in Western Australia, Tasmania, and South Australia :—

	Insane persons per 1,000 of population.
New South Wales	2·9
Victoria	3·5
Queensland	3·0
South Australia.....	2·5
Western Australia.....	1·8
Tasmania	2·3
New Zealand	3·2
Australasia	3·0

The following figures are given by Mulhall for a series of years, in most cases from 1884 to 1888; they show the number of insane per 1,000 inhabitants in various foreign countries :—

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