

SOCIAL CONDITION.

SAVINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

Working man's
Paradise.

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

Banks.

Some idea both of the celerity and extent of this accumulation may be gathered from the increase of deposits in the Banks carrying on business in the Colonies, and in the following table the deposits in Banks, including Savings Banks, and, in some cases, Building Societies, &c., at four decennial periods are given :—

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.
	£	£	£	£
New South Wales.....	5,645,101	7,989,801	23,006,720	42,988,550
Victoria	7,575,406	12,476,677	23,721,348	50,183,551
Queensland	334,503	1,647,830	5,633,097	12,154,657
South Australia	875,327	2,038,719	6,231,004	9,716,937
Western Australia	*2,487	*15,583	*23,344	1,365,906
Tasmania	+729,085	875,512	2,969,390	4,220,292
New Zealand	905,675	3,789,639	10,618,893	17,497,436
	16,067,584	28,833,761	72,203,796	138,127,329
Per head of population.....	£13	£15	£26	£35

* Savings Banks only. † Banks of issue only.

Increase of
Deposits.

From this it may be gathered that the increase of deposits of all classes in Banks between 1861 and 1881 was exactly 100 per cent.,

allowing for the increase of population ; while between 1871 and 1891 the deposits per head of population increased by about 133 per cent. When compared with Great Britain, it will be found that the amount of deposits per head of population in Australasia far exceeds that in the older country. In 1861, indeed, the sum per head in Britain exceeded that in Australasia, amounting to £15, against £13 in the Colonies. In 1874 the total in Britain amounted to £25 per head, which ten years later, in 1884, sunk to £23, and in 1890 to £16. In the Colonies there has been no falling off at any period, and in 1888 the total deposits per head far exceeded the highest level ever reached in Great Britain.

Turning to the case of the wage-earning classes in the Colonies, Savings Banks. it will be found that the Savings Banks, which may be taken to be practically the Bank of these classes, show enormous development since 1861. From the return here given it is evident that the tendency for many years has been to an increase in the number of small depositors. The figures for the last decade show this in a marked degree. In the interval between 1881 and 1891 it appears that the number of depositors in Savings Banks increased from 311,124 to 741,627, or more than 138 per cent. In 1881, however, each depositor had an average of £30 in the Bank, but in 1891 he had only £26. The amount per depositor in decennial periods from 1861 may appear to point to a serious retrogression, declining as it does from £47 to £26, but it is not so, for the large increase in the number of depositors must be taken into consideration. Habits of thrift. There is evidence that the less affluent classes of the community are more largely represented in the books of the banks than was formerly the case, and the smaller amount of average deposit seems to show that habits of thrift have in a greater degree permeated the community. It is the total number of depositors and the total amount of deposits, therefore, which indicate the general prosperity of the people. A greater number of depositors than the comparatively small total for 1861 might probably be selected from the number in any of the other years noted in the table whose average deposits would far exceed £47. Queensland

The savings of
the people.

depositors have the largest amounts at their credit, averaging £35 18s. per head, New South Wales coming second with £33 14s. 5d., while those of Western Australia have the least, their average being only £12 11s. 3d. The subjoined table shows the progress of accumulation in the Saving Banks and Post Office Banks of each of the Colonies for the several periods:—

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

	1881.		1891.	
	Depositors.	Amount.	Depositors.	Amount.
		£		£
New South Wales.....	72,384	2,698,703	158,426	5,342,135
Victoria	101,820	2,569,438	300,781	5,715,687
Queensland.....	20,168	944,251	46,259	1,660,753
South Australia.....	37,742	1,288,450	78,795	2,217,419
Western Australia	3,219	23,344	3,564	46,181
Tasmania	14,728	369,278	26,916	554,417
New Zealand	61,054	1,549,515	126,886	3,406,949
	311,124	9,442,979	741,627	18,943,541
Amount per Depositor ...	£30		£26	

* Information not available.

† 1863, first year of Savings Banks.

‡ 1872.

A full consideration of the economic aspect of banking will be found in a previous chapter, page 363.

INSOLVENCY.

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

Schedules of insolvents not reliable.

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

Colony.	1861.		1871.		1881.		1891.	
	No.	Liabilities	No.	Liabilities	No.	Liabilities	No.	Liabilities
New South Wales.....	463	£ 589,727	544	£ 325,941	724	£ 379,290	1,189	£ 939,778
Victoria	1,287	1,088,208	631	444,117	620	303,892	807	1,824,595
Queensland.....	24	46,866	73	411,835	153	73,692	300	197,078
South Australia	108	101,140	247	246,713	215	123,629	67	33,100
Tasmania.....	155	173,933	25	62,560	33	113,770	110	117,575
New Zealand	*	*	737	*	1,406	823,918	805	499,650
	2,037	1,999,964	2,257	1,491,166	3,151	1,717,201	3,078	3,661,776

* No Return.

† Returns not complete.

From the above table it would appear that the number of insolvencies was greater in Victoria in 1861 than in any generally. Decrease of Insolvencies

other year under notice; while in 1881 the extraordinary number of 1,406 was reached in New Zealand, a total greater than any other Colony has produced in any year given in the table; notwithstanding this large number, however, the deficiency between the estimated assets and liabilities was very small, amounting to an average of only £75 per insolvent. It is an important and gratifying feature that, in spite of the great increase of population, and the consequent extension of trade, the number of insolvencies has not increased since 1881, while the amount of the indebtedness of the bankrupts per head is less than at some former periods, and the proportion of assets to liabilities is probably greater. The proportion of insolvents to population in Australasia has largely decreased since 1861, the numbers being, per 10,000 inhabitants:—

1861	...	16.09	1881	.....	12.87
1871	.....	11.46	1891	.....	8.00

NEWSPAPERS AND LETTERS.

Australasian
Newspapers.

There is hardly anything more indicative of the social superiority of a civilized people than the prevalence of correspondence and a large distribution of newspapers. In these respects all the Colonies of Australasia have for many years been remarkable. In proportion to population, it is doubtful whether any country in the world can boast of a larger number or a better class of newspapers than these Colonies. Great advances have been made in this respect since 1871, and the rate of progress, both in number and excellence, has been even more rapid between 1881 and the present time. There is no means of correctly estimating the number of newspapers actually printed and distributed in the Colonies, because the Post Office returns indicate but a small proportion of the actual production. Some idea, however, may be gathered for purposes of comparison with other countries, by noting the distribution of newspapers through the agency of the Post Office. The return for 1891, which comprises all the Colonies, shows that no less than 96,000,000 newspapers passed through the

Post Offices, being an average of 25 to every inhabitant. Allowance has been made, as before, for newspapers entered in both the sending and the receiving Colony.

In the same year there were 183,695,000 letters delivered through the post, being more than 48 letters for every man, woman, and child in Australasia. Allowance has been made in this figure for intercolonial letters counted both in the receiving and despatching colonies. An examination of the statistics of other countries shows that the people of these Colonies stand absolutely at the head of the world's populations in this respect. The inhabitants of Great Britain have nearly but not quite so large a correspondence per head, but the people of no other nation can even approach it.

Amount of
correspondence.

PARKS, MUSEUMS, &c.

All the Australasian capitals are liberally supplied with parks and recreation grounds. In Sydney and the suburbs there are parks, squares, and public gardens comprising an area of 3,761 acres, including 780 acres, which form the Centennial Park. In addition to these there is the picturesque National Park, of 36,320 acres, situated about 16 miles from the centre of the Metropolis. Melbourne has no less than 5,293 acres of recreation grounds, of which 1,723 acres are within the city boundaries, 2,788 acres in the suburban municipalities, and 782 acres outside those municipalities. Adelaide is surrounded by a broad belt of park lands, and also contains a number of squares within the city boundaries, covering altogether an area of 2,300 acres. Brisbane, Hobart, Perth, and the chief cities of New Zealand are also well provided for in this respect. In all the Colonies large areas of land have been dedicated as public parks. The Botanic Gardens of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide are included in the areas above referred to. Each of these gardens has a special attraction of its own. They are all well kept, and reflect great credit upon the communities to which they belong.

Parks and
Recreation
Grounds.

Botanic
Gardens.

Museums and
Art Galleries.

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

PUBLIC CHARITIES.

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

Propertied
classes.

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

State assistance
to charities.

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

Supervision of
expenditure.

Even where the Government grants aid for philanthropic purposes, the management of the institutions supervising the expenditure is in private hands; and in addition to State-aided institutions there are numerous private charities, whose efforts for

the relief of those whom penury, sickness, or misfortune has afflicted are beyond all praise. Rescue of the young from crime.

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

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

The following table shows the total expenditure and the number of persons admitted to the hospitals during the year 1891, as far as information can be obtained. The return for Victoria is made out up to June 30, 1892 ; the figures for South Australia refer to the Adelaide Hospital only. Expenditure on hospitals.

Colony.	No. of persons admitted during the year.	Expenditure.
		£
New South Wales	17,835	134,055
Victoria	19,695	142,506
Queensland	11,156	93,531
South Australia	2,147	13,700
Western Australia.....	695	9,775
Tasmania	2,628	16,913
New Zealand	7,489	74,039

Asylums for
the Insane.

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

Number of
insane.

The following table shows the number of insane patients remaining on 31st December, and expenditure for the year 1891 as far as can be ascertained :—

Colony.	No. of patients.	Expenditure.
		£
New South Wales	3,134	100,112
Victoria	3,769	110,065
Queensland	1,204	33,000
South Australia	815	23,339
Western Australia	145	4,075
Tasmania	357	14,749
New Zealand	1,848	37,189
Australasia	11,272	322,529

Destitute
Asylums.

The amounts expended on destitute asylums and benevolent societies cannot be separated from other items of expenditure in some of the Colonies. As far as they can be ascertained they were, for 1891, including both Government aid and private contributions, in New South Wales, £85,202 ; Victoria, £83,815 ; Queensland, £41,166 ; Western Australia, £8,756 ; and Tasmania, £13,007 ; while the number of inmates of the various asylums was, at the end of 1891 :—

Colony.	Inmates.
New South Wales	3,060
Victoria	2,584
Queensland	1,620
South Australia	346
Western Australia.....	169
Tasmania	700
New Zealand	1,416
Australasia	9,895

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

The 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 shown by the imperfect returns, amounted in 1891 to about £559,800 ; adding to this the amount of private subscriptions, &c., the poor and the unfortunate have benefited during the year to the extent of over £1,000,000. 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. Total expenditure in relief.

LAW AND CRIME.

Proceedings against a person accused of an offence may be initiated, by the laws of all the provinces, either by formal arrest or by summons. Serious offences are not often dealt with by process of summons, though on the contrary, in some of the colonies, it is not unusual even in trivial cases for the offender to be arrested. These circumstances should be taken into consideration when dealing with apprehensions by the police, which are unusually numerous in some of the Australasian Colonies. It is, however, not easy to make a comparison of the practice of the several Colonies in this respect, inasmuch as the records, except in the case of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, merely show the total number of cases that come before the Magistrates' Courts, without distinguishing the proceedings arising from summons from those wherein the person charged was arrested by the police. Another circumstance, which operates against a clear comparison of the criminal condition of the different Colonies, is the fact that there are considerable divergences Methods of criminal procedure.
Cases dealt with by magistrates.

Mode of dealing
with charges.

in the criminal codes, as well as in the classification of offences ; besides which the laws are administered with greater strictness in some of the provinces than in others. In almost all cases the first hearing of a criminal charge takes place before a Magistrate's Court, whether composed of Stipendiaries, or of unpaid local Justices of the Peace. These Courts have power of jurisdiction as regards minor cases, but in reference to the more serious charges, should a *prima facie* case be made out, they can commit the accused person to take his trial before a higher Court. The following statement shows the number of cases dealt with in the Magistrates' Courts of the several Colonies in the year 1891, classified as far as the nature of the returns furnished will permit :—

Colony.	Offenders against —			Total.
	The Person.	Property.	Good Order, &c.	
New South Wales.....	6,470	7,243	62,091	75,804
Victoria	3,341	2,792	52,956	59,089
Queensland	2,641	2,471	13,612	18,724
South Australia.....	143	524	7,438	8,105
Western Australia.....	376	580	4,949	5,005
Tasmania	524	756	4,893	6,173
New Zealand.....	1,458	2,437	13,718	17,613
Australasia.....	14,953	16,803	158,757	190,513

Disposal of cases. There were, therefore, 190,513 cases altogether dealt with by the Magistrates, in 45,667 of which the persons concerned were discharged, either as guiltless, or because sufficient evidence to establish their guilt was not forthcoming ; 140,701 were summarily convicted, and condemned either to fine or imprisonment ; while 4,145 were committed to take their trial before a jury. These last-mentioned cases are included principally among the offences enumerated in the first two columns, which comprise what may be properly called crime, such as murder, manslaughter, offences against females, assaults, larceny, burglary, horse and cattle stealing, arson, forgery and other offences against the

currency, conspiracy, &c. The remaining column relates to drunkenness and its concomitant disorderly conduct and foul language, and to breaches of Municipal and other by-laws, and of various Acts of Parliament involving good order more or less. The number of serious charges dealt with by Magistrates' Courts in each province is shown in the following table, together with the number of cases in which the accused was committed for trial by a higher Court. The proportion per cent. of serious charges to the mean population is also given :—

Colony.	Serious Charges dealt with.	Committals for Trial.	Percentage of Serious Charges to Mean Population.
New South Wales.....	13,713	1,582	1·2
Victoria	6,133	1,142	0·5
Queensland	5,112	575	1·3
South Australia	667	171	0·2
Western Australia.....	956	97	1·8
Tasmania	1,280	98	0·9
New Zealand	3,895	480	0·6
Australasia	31,756	4,145	0·8

The number of convictions by magistrates during 1891 is set forth in the following table. It will be observed that as regards Victoria and South Australia the totals only are given, as the returns published by those Colonies do not show the classification of the offences for which summary punishments were inflicted. The table also gives the proportion borne by the numbers convicted to the total population of each Colony :—

Colony.	Offences against—			Total.	Percentage of Summary Convictions to Population.
	The Person.	Property.	Good Order, &c.		
New South Wales.....	2,904	3,454	49,353	55,711	4·87
Victoria				42,407	3·70
Queensland	1,483	1,181	11,579	14,243	3·52
South Australia.....				6,918	2·19
Western Australia	202	362	2,749	3,313	6·42
Tasmania	259	453	4,084	4,760	3·20
New Zealand.....	744	1,448	11,127	13,349	2·10

Arrests for
drunkenness.

More than half the cases heard in the Magistrates' Courts, and nearly half the summary convictions, are for drunkenness. The figures for each province, except Western Australia, for the year 1891, are given in the following statement, which also gives the number of arrests and convictions for this offence to every hundred of the population. The records of Western Australia do not distinguish the arrests and convictions for drunkenness from those for other offences against good order generally. The work of the police in arresting drunken persons seems to be about the same in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, but while convictions seem to be the lot of the person arrested in the two Colonies first named, in Victoria so rigid a practice does not obtain, for 41 out of every 100 arrested escape without being punished by the Bench, many probably preferring to estreat a small amount of bail, rather than face exposure in the Court :—

Colony.	Charges of Drunkenness.	Summary Convictions.	Percentage to Population.	
			Of Apprehensions.	Of Convictions.
New South Wales...	22,075	20,323	1·9	1·8
Victoria	18,057	10,658	1·6	0·9
Queensland.....	5,536	5,450	1·4	1·3
South Australia.....	2,987	2,846	0·9	0·9
Tasmania	1,147	1,095	0·8	0·7
New Zealand	5,384	5,246	0·9	0·8
Australasia *	55,186	45,618	1·4	1·2

* Western Australia not included.

Arrests no
criterion as to
extent of *
drunkenness.

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

Consumption of
liquor per head.

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

Colony.	Proof gallons of alcohol per head of population.
New South Wales	2·83
Victoria	3·93
Queensland	2·72
South Australia	2·61
Western Australia	4·15
Tasmania	1·88
New Zealand	1·74
Australasia	2·93

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

The following table shows the number of police, the number of inhabitants to each police constable, and the average area which each constable had under his supervision during the year 1892; it is obvious that in nearly every colony the police force requires strengthening:—

Police in proportion to inhabitants.

Colony.	Number of Police.			Number of Inhabitants to each Police Constable.			Area under supervision of each Police Constable in Country Districts. Square miles.
	Metro-politan Area.	Country Districts.	Whole Colony.	Metro-politan Area.	Country Districts.	Whole Colony.	
New South Wales	577	1,088	1,665	664	688	680	285
Victoria	740	795	1,535	663	817	743	110
Queensland	211	906	1,117	481	322	352	738
South Australia ...	171	225	396	779	832	809	4,015
Western Australia	35	204	239	241	203	208	5,196
Tasmania	50	258	308	669	438	476	101
New Zealand	42	461	503	791	1,287	1,246	227

Number of cases
no indication of
social condition.

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

Decrease of
crime.

The following table shows the proportion of committals by Magistrates, and of convictions in the Superior Courts of all the Colonies, per 1,000 of the population for the last four decennial periods. It will be seen that the committals have decreased from 2·2 in 1861 to 1·1 in 1891, and the convictions by jury during the same period have decreased from 1·3 to 0·6, or a little more than one-half :—

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

Progress of
morality.

In noting these facts and comparing results with that obtained in Great Britain during the same period, it must not be forgotten that some of the provinces of Australasia have been compelled gradually to reform a portion of their original population, and that in the case of colonies such as Victoria and Queensland, not

originally peopled in any degree by convicts, the attractions of the gold-fields have drawn within their borders a population by no means free from criminal instincts and antecedents. Viewed in this light the steady progress made cannot but be regarded as exceedingly satisfactory, and the expectation may be not unreasonably entertained that the same improvement will be continued until the ratio of crime to population will compare favourably with that of any part of the world.

It is peculiar circumstance that, though the people of Australasia are of one blood, and the laws against crime are practically the same in each Colony, some of the Colonies show a far greater ratio of conviction for serious crime than do the others. A crude theory has been put forward that this pre-eminence in crime is due to a convict taint in the Colonies possessing a comparatively high record. The incorrectness of this presumption will be manifest, since Tasmania—a province now in one of the most favourable positions in regard to serious crime—is the one which suffered most from the transportation system. Whatever be the explanation, the fact, however, remains that New South Wales and Western Australia have a higher rate of criminal convictions than the other provinces, and that South Australia shows a marked contrast in its freedom from serious crime. The following table shows the convictions in the Superior Courts of the different Colonies, at decennial periods, from 1861 to 1891 :—

Greater ratio of convictions in certain Colonies.

Convictions in Superior Courts.

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

CLASSIFICATION OF OFFENCES.

Committals by magistrates.

The committals by magistrates, and the convictions in the Superior Courts of each province per 1,000 of population during 1891, were as follows:—

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

Classification of offences.

A classification of the offences for which the convictions in Superior Courts in 1891 took place is given in the subjoined table:—

Colony.	Offences against			Total.
	The Person.	Property.	Good Order, &c.	
New South Wales	242	587	135	964
Victoria	87	608	34	729
Queensland	59	136	37	232
South Australia	14	60	16	90
Western Australia	17	16	11	44
Tasmania	19	28	16	63
New Zealand	27	163	86	276
Australasia	465	1,598	335	2,398

Convictions in New South Wales.

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

Capital Punishment.

The punishment of death is very seldom resorted to except in cases of murder, though formerly such was not the case. Thus, in

1861, the executions in the whole of the Colonies amounted to 20; they had fallen to 8 in 1871, to 5 in 1881, and to 2 in 1890. In 1891, however, the number mounted up to 14, of which 7 were in Victoria, and 3 in New South Wales. In South Australia, the extreme penalty has been most sparingly inflicted, there having been only 9 in the 21 years which closed with 1891, and until that year there had been none since 1883. The following table shows the number of executions in each province in each decade of the 50 years which ended with 1890, also those which took place in 1891. 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.
New South Wales..	68	37	34	27	23	3
Victoria		47	41	19	13	7
Queensland		1	14	18	15	1
South Australia ...		7	12	6	2	1
Western Australia ...						1
Tasmania	83	32	15	3	5	1
New Zealand				12	8	.....
Total.....	151	124	116	85	66	14

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 five of the Colonies allow of this distinction being made. The number and classification of prisoners in confinement on December 31, 1891, were as follows :—

Number of
Prisoners in
Gaols.

Colony.	Tried and Sentenced.	Awaiting Trial.	Debtors.	Total.
New South Wales.....	2,489	127	.....	2,616
Victoria	1,715	95	.....	1,810
Queensland.....	579	29	2	610
South Australia.....	267	11	.....	278
New Zealand	496	36	2	534
Total	5,546	298	4	5,848

Prison
population.

The returns of Tasmania give the total number of prisoners in confinement on 31st December, 1891, as 170, while Western Australia records a daily average of 285. Taking this figure just mentioned to be correct for 31st December, there would have been a prison population for Australasia of 6,303, or about 1·6 in every 1,000 of the population.

SUICIDES.

Suicides.

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

	Average of 10 years.				
	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1882-1891.
New South Wales	45	30	83	119	97
Victoria	64	90	102	119	112
Queensland	°	8	30	73	52
South Australia	13	11	34	31	28
Western Australia	1	*	4	6	6
Tasmania	7	4	6	9	7
New Zealand.....	*	°	42	56	54
Total	130	143	301	413	356
Per 100,000 of population	13·0	8·4	10·9	10·6	10·5

* Information not available.

Proportion of
suicides.

Compared with the total number of deaths, suicides in the Australasian colonies during the last twenty years (1872-91) show the following proportion per 100,000 :—

Colony.	Per 100,000 Deaths.	Per 100,000 Inhabitants.
New South Wales	649	9·8
Victoria	736	11·5
Queensland	862	14·8
South Australia	620	8·9
Western Australia.....	676	10·7
Tasmania	373	5·8
New Zealand	806	8·4
Australasia	706	10·3

Tasmania, therefore, stands in a more favourable position than any of the other Colonies, and is the only Colony in which the rate is less than in the United Kingdom, where deaths by suicides average only 7 per 100,000 of population. Compared with the rates of some European countries that of Australasia is however, small, for during the years 1885-87 there were no less than 13·0 suicides in Belgium, 15·9 in Austria, 20·5 in France, and 20·8 in Germany per 100,000 inhabitants.

ILLEGITIMACY.

The following figures show the number of births of illegitimate children and the total births for the years 1871, 1881, and 1891, respectively :—

	1871.		1881.		1891.	
	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
Victoria.....	747	27,382	1,382	27,145	2,064	38,505
Queensland	156	5,205	345	8,220	684	14,715
South Australia ...	*	7,082	*	10,708	315	10,737
Western Australia	*	760	*	1,005	*	1,786
Tasmania	*	3,053	*	3,918	185	4,971
New Zealand	*	10,592	534	18,732	638	18,273
	1,685	74,217	3,524	98,721	6,001	128,445
Per cent. of Births	3·19	.....	4·24	.....	4·74	.....

* Information not available.

Illegitimacy also is increasing upon the whole in Australasia, as the table just given shows. The ratio, indeed, compared with the total births is still rather better than in England ; but while the percentage of illegitimate births has steadily declined during the last fifty years in England, it has advanced in Australasia during the period included in the table. The following are the average

annual percentages of illegitimate births to total births, calculated over a series of years for each of the Colonies and the United Kingdom :—

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

DIVORCE.

Divorce.

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

Divorce law in
New South
Wales.

In New South Wales the chief grounds on which divorce was granted, under the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1873, were adultery since marriage on the part of the wife, and adultery with cruelty on the part of the husband. A measure has, however, passed through both Houses of the Legislature, and has come into force during 1892, which in the main assimilates the law to that of Victoria, where in addition to the grounds mentioned above divorces may be granted on both sides for desertion for over three years, habitual drunkenness, habitual cruelty and neglect, imprisonment for over three years and still in

prison on commuted capital sentence, or under penal servitude for seven years, conviction within one year previously of attempt to murder, or assault with intent to commit grievous bodily harm, assault or cruel beating, and, in the case of the husband, five years frequent convictions for crime, and habitually leaving wife without support. In the colonies of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, divorcés are granted principally for adultery on the part of the wife, and adultery coupled with desertion for over two years on the part of the husband.

The following table shows the number of decrees for dissolution of marriage, and for judicial separation granted in each Colony in quinquennial periods since 1867, as far as it is possible to procure the information :—

Colony.	1867-70.		1871-75.		1876-80.		1881-85.		1886-90.		1891.	
	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.	Divorces.	Judicial separation.
New South Wales	...	...	10	...	81	2	98	13	171	29	50	17
Victoria	31	8	33	6	41	2	74	8	124	9	99	...
Queensland	...	...	4	1	14	...	5	2	26	3	5	1
South Australia	7	1	22	3	35	2	31	10	23	2	5	...
Western Australia	6	2	...	...	1	1	5	...	8	...	4	...
Tasmania	1	1	9	...	9	...	9	...	15	2	3	...
New Zealand	o	o	o	*	*	...	*	*	110	5	20	3
Australasia ...	45	12	78	10	181	7	222	33	477	50	186	21

* Information not available.

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

Sufficient data are not to hand to admit of a comparison of divorces and marriages, except on the basis of the number of each

PROPORTION OF DIVORCES.

in any year. Taking the figures in the foregoing table, the following shows the number of divorces in each province per 10,000 marriages :—

Colony.	1867-70.	1871-75.	1876-80.	1881-85.	1886-90.	1891.
New South Wales .....	...	†11·2	32·0	31·1	51·7	79·2
Victoria	20·9	16·0	16·9	24·4	31·1	112·8
Queensland .....	...	8·0	18·7	6·0	19·0	20·6
South Australia	15·6	33·5	34·6	33·1	24·3	23·6
Western Australia	117·8	...	20·5	44·8	53·5	96·9
Tasmania	7·8	27·4	22·0	18·0	35·4	30·4
New Zealand	*...	*...	*...	*...	63·5	60·4

* Information not available. † 1874 and 1875 only.

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

Colony.	1886.		1887.		1888.		1889.		1890.		1891.	
	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.
New South Wales ...	32	4	25	3	28	5	44	8	42	9	50	17
Victoria	16	...	18	5	28	1	22	3	40	...	99	...
Queensland	1	...	...	1	6	...	11	...	8	2	5	1
South Australia	10	1	3	1	2	...	6	...	2	...	5	...
Western Australia ..	2	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	3	...	4	...
Tasmania	6	1	...	...	4	...	3	1	2	...	3	...
New Zealand	24	...	16	1	32	...	17	1	21	3	20	3
Australasia	91	6	62	11	102	6	104	13	118	14	186	21
Totals	97		73		108		117		132		207	
Number of marriages	25,079		25,067		27,000		26,810		27,525		27,663	
Divorces and Separations per 10,000 marriages	38·7		29·1		40·0		43·6		48·0		74·8	

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

countries or the United States, as will be seen by the following statement :—

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 throughout Australasia on the 31st December, 1891, was 11,090. This represents 2·8 per 1,000 of the population. The rates in the United Kingdom for the same period were—England, 3·0 ; Scotland, 3·1 ; and Ireland, 3·5. The amount of insanity in Australasia and in England, compared with their respective populations, is, therefore, about the same, though there appears to be a tendency in the latter country for the rate to increase. The ratios, both in Scotland and Ireland, are higher than in the rest of Great Britain or in Australasia. The following table shows the proportion of lunacy in each of the Colonies at the end of 1891, from which it will appear that the greatest proportion is to be found in Victoria, and the smallest in Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia :—

	Insane persons per 1,000 of population.
New South Wales.....	2·7
Victoria	3·3
Queensland.....	2·4
South Australia.....	2·5
Western Australia.....	2·3
Tasmania	2·1
New Zealand	2·9
Australasia.....	2·8

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 countries:—

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Present condition of Australasia.

The preceding pages contain but a brief sketch, or imperfect outline, of the present condition of the Australasian Colonies; showing, in fact, only the most prominent features, but leaving unnoticed an immense number of details, which, if there were space to introduce them, would add considerably to the impressiveness of the picture. Even the material resources of these vast provinces have not been fully indicated, for nothing has been said of the magnificent timber, unlimited in quantity and unsurpassed for quality, which abounds in every part of Australasia. Nothing has been said, either, of the boundless supplies of fish which are to be obtained in every part of the enormous coastline of these provinces, which will one day form the source of a large and profitable trade. The political institutions of the Seven Colonies have been described, and a little has been said of the system of local self-government which, in one form or another, pervades Australasia to a greater or less extent; but there has not been room to dilate at any length upon the literary, scientific, and charitable institutions which are to be found in all the principal centres of Australasian population, diffusing the blessings of art, science, and literature on the one hand, and soothing the pains of sickness, and mitigating the sorrows of distress, on the other.

Enough has been said, however, to show how these great Colonies, from the humblest beginnings, have grown and expanded into important provinces, peopled with a race of hardy, enterprising, and industrious colonists, with free institutions such as are enjoyed by few nations in the old world, and without those social and caste impediments which are in older countries so great a hindrance to the march of civilization.

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

Australasia's
future.

