

The Weekly Register

OF POLITICS, FACTS, AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

"BE JUST AND FEAR NOT."

VOL. IV.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 1845.

No. 89.

To Correspondents.

"A Picture of Love," in our next.

"E. M. M.—L'Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin, and the other works of M. Jouy have been already translated, and published in English, and are somewhat out of date; but we shall be glad to have a few more specimens of our fair correspondent's good taste in translation.

THE POLITICAL REGISTER.

"It is of great importance in a state—not only to guard Society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of Society against the injustice of the other part. Justice is the end of Government.—It is the end of civil Society."—HAMILTON.

QUIT RENTS.

THE article, under this heading, in last week's *Atlas* is evidently an *argumentum ad captandum* addressed to the electors of St. Vincent and Auckland. The writer takes it for granted that the constituency of these counties are, like so many others, heavily burthened with arrears of quit rents, and he thinks, accordingly, that he may "play a great card" by denouncing these rents as "grinding exactions," as "a most discreditable perversion of the royal prerogative," an "intolerable grievance," a "flagrant iniquity," and so on.

Ugly names are sometimes a very convenient auxiliary to a weak argument. In this case, if we except one or two misstatements, they seem to be a substitute for argument altogether. Such epithets may possibly give satisfaction to men who are fond of paying their debts by legislation; they may have the weight of argument with weak minded persons who are ready to jump at remote conclusions without any species of consecutive reasoning; thus they may in some measure effect the object of the writer. He may have his reward. Indeed, if the constituency are thus weak, or thus unprincipled, it is right that they should have representatives who know how to estimate their intellectual acumen at its worth. There are however a few—and their numbers are on the increase—who estimate these hard words at their just value, that is—nothing at all; and they think, moreover, with us, that their incessant use in the columns of the squatters' organ is *prima facie* evidence of a bad cause.

Putting aside, therefore, all this string of epithets as unworthy of further notice, we

proceed to animadvert briefly upon the misstatements by which it is attempted to prove the injustice of these exactions. The first misstatement is that "these QUIT RENTS were imposed under the understanding that they were to be taken in lieu of other taxation." From this it is argued that as the government has departed from its agreement by imposing other taxation, it has forfeited its right "to insist upon the grantee performing his part." The value of this argument depends, of course, upon the reality and truth of the fact stated. We would ask, therefore, at what time was this "understanding," that the quit rents were to be taken in lieu of other taxation, entered into? Where is it expressed? In the deeds of grant? No. In the Governor's proclamations? No. If it were a mere verbal agreement is there any living witness to testify to its having taken place? None is adduced, and we defy the *Atlas* to shew that any such understanding or agreement was ever, either expressly or tacitly, entered into. The fact stated is as purely imaginative as the adventures of "my uncle Toby," or the "battle of the books in St. James's Library;" the conclusion drawn from it is therefore nothing worth. We are willing, however, to admit that some such understanding should have been entered into; that is, that a *sufficient* rent should have been imposed upon the land, so as, from that source to obtain the principal means of supporting government, and thereby to obviate the necessity of imposing indirect taxes, which are unequal in their operation, and act as restrictions upon commerce. This is an opinion which is expressed by Mill and other eminent economists, in treating of taxation in new countries, and it is a subject of great regret that the government was so long blind to its duty in this respect. That it begins to deal more wisely and justly with this matter than it did heretofore redounds to its honour; and it should be the desire of every honest colonist that it may proceed in the same spirit gradually to remedy the evils and extravagances of former days.

The *Atlas* goes on to say—

"At the time when these quit rents were reserved the settlers were allowed to pay them by feeding and clothing convict servants, which, so far from being a burthen, they looked upon as a benefit. It is quite certain that had it not been for this way of getting rid of the impost, many persons would have

paused before they took upon themselves the possession of land coupled with so heavy a tax. The government has become unable to furnish the settlers with assigned servants, but it still adheres to its bargain, and the settler is called upon to pay to the utmost that which he never contemplated having to pay at all. Thus has an intolerable burthen been laid upon the country, not from the terms of the original agreement, but from the subsequent default of the government."

Again another effort of imagination! It is even a more clumsy fabric than the other; the chief materials having only to be brought a little more closely together in order to destroy each other.

1. The settlers were allowed to pay their rents by feeding and clothing convict servants.

2. By this means they got rid of the impost.

3. The government has ceased to furnish the settlers with assigned servants, but it still adheres to its bargain!

A most tyrannical government, truly, to compel the settlers to feed and clothe servants which do not exist! Really this is a refinement upon despotism itself, to command that which is physically impossible! But where are we to look for this terrible order of the Executive? Alas! again only in the brain of the would-be member for St. Vincent.

But we may have mistaken the writer's meaning, for the passage is, at the best, but nonsense. Suppose, then, by stretching a point, we interpret it in this way, that the government at one time gave land upon condition that the grantee should feed and clothe a certain number of convicts; that, subsequently, when this arrangement became greatly profitable to the settler (instead of being, as before, a burthen imposed in consideration for the land), the government imposed a quit rent upon future grants. If this be the writer's meaning, it has some foundation in fact; but what then becomes of the alleged "breach of compact?" Why should the government be denounced, if in justice to the public, whose trustee it is, "it still adheres to its bargain?" Ought not the grantee to adhere, in like manner, to his? Ought he not to pay his rent? He received his land free of purchase. A paltry rent of a few pence yearly was the sole return which the public were to receive for the land which the government of the time was most culpable

in thus inconsiderately alienating. The same culpability went to favour the grantee by allowing the rent to remain for a time in his own hands, in order to facilitate the improvements which, it was expected, he would make on the land. He was even offered the alternative, and has even now the alternative, of redeeming his quit rents by a twenty years purchase, thus becoming the possessor of the property, in fee simple, for a mere fraction of the minimum price fixed by Act of Parliament. To such an extent have the grantees been favoured—unduly favoured—by government; and yet because the present Governor has the honesty and the manliness to deal justly between the grantee and the injured public, by enforcing the payment of those rents which his immediate predecessors culpably neglected to collect, we are told that—"If there be one page in the history of the Government of New South Wales to which posterity will look with deeper execration than another, it is that in which will be recorded the conduct of Sir George Gipps with regard to quit rents." We venture to predict the very reverse of all this. It is not probable that many more governors of New South Wales will obtain statues, seeing that the conduct of Sir R. Bourke, the only one who has already attained that honour, is compared by the organ of the dominant faction to that of the elder Rothschild in depositing large sums of money with a banker for the purpose of ruining him. If, however, the colonists should at some future time honour his Excellency with a statue (an event which is far from improbable, seeing the steady reaction that is working among them in favour of good sense), we have no doubt that his honest fortitude in seeking to maintain this, as well as other legitimate sources of revenue, will be prominently recorded upon its base. With respect to "history" and "posterity," let governors "be just and fear not." Few of them, if they act thus, are likely to be popular during their administration, but they need not fear injustice from posterity. Providence, who tries men during their lives, always takes care that some one is found to rescue distinguished merit from oblivion or obloquy.

The *Atlas* proceeds—"Again, the possession of these lands was acquired not merely with reference to the advantages derived from the land granted, but to the adjacent lands. The terms on which these lands can be acquired have been made infinitely more severe, but there is no corresponding mitigation in the demand of quit rent."

This, in pure equity, should be a reason for *augmenting* the rent, rather than for a "*mitigation* in the demand." If the adjacent lands are made more valuable, whether by cultivation and settlement, or by act of parliament, then those in question are equally enhanced. Why should private individuals be made rich at the public expense, instead of being suffered to rise gradually by legitimate industry?

Finally, the *Atlas* argues that the quit rents should be remitted, because "when quit rents were imposed there were no district councils in the land." When people want land they must pay rent or purchase money for it. When they want roads and bridges they must also pay for making them and keeping them in repair. The two payments are distinct, and their object and application

are distinct. To decline one payment on account of the other would be as absurd as it would be in our contemporary to refuse to pay his tailor, because he had paid his shoemaker the day previous.

Besides, if the district councils were annihilated, the demand for roads and bridges would still exist, and paid for they must be. On whom then should the burthen fall, if not on those who, each in his respective locality, would profit by them? This can have no possible connexion with the rent which the landholder owes to the public proprietor, for the use of land transferred to him upon that easy condition.

There is, indeed, one species of hardship connected with the quit rents which the *Atlas* in its reckless and indiscriminate condemnation has not noticed. We allude to the case of third parties who have purchased lands from the grantees, not knowing that they were burdened with arrears of quit rent. We believe that a good many persons have been defrauded in this way; and although the government is not to blame for this, except in its having permitted the arrears to accumulate, it might still be questionable whether it would not be proper to deal mercifully in cases where real hardship was made to appear; but it is one of the evils arising from our having to contend with an unprincipled faction, that we must abandon exceptions, and minor details of this kind—at whatever inconvenience to individuals—in order to contend for great and general principles, which to abandon would be as culpable as the consequences might be ruinous.

The object of the *Atlas* and its projectors is clearly to create, both within and without the boundaries, a land oligarchy; to extend to the faction thus created every species of undue favour and exemption from public contributions; and certainly of all the measures of this kind that have been thought of, none, save the "freehold and inheritance" scheme, is more barefaced than the proposed exemption of the settlers from the payment of quit rents;—a robbery of the public funds the very mention of which none but an apathetic people, like ours, would for a moment tolerate. We trust that when our contemporary returns to the subject he will bring something better with him than bad adjectives, imaginary "understandings," and incomprehensible "bargains," lest, peradventure, even those who seek to gain by the abandonment of the outstanding claims despair of their cause from the utter want of argument in its favour.

NEW ZEALAND

By the *Slains Castle* which arrived on Thursday, we learn with deep regret that the Town of Kororaraka, the oldest settlement in New Zealand was attacked, taken, plundered, and burnt to the ground by a party of armed natives, in number about two thousand, on the 11th ult.

The small armed men and marines of H. M. S. *Hazard*, under the command of Capt. Robertson, endeavoured to drive them back, but in consequence of the block house which was the key of the European position, having been surprised and taken, his party were obliged to retire into the stockade in the town. Captain Robertson was dangerously wounded in the affray.

Soon afterwards a simultaneous attack was made, and a heavy fire was maintained on both sides for three hours, when the assailants were repulsed, and retired to the hills where they remained.

At one o'clock, the magazine in the stockade unfortunately exploded, and several persons were severely hurt and contused. The greatest portion of their ammunition being exhausted by this fearful circumstance, it was deemed advisable to embark the inhabitants and troops and evacuate the town, which was then immediately entered by the natives, who plundered and destroyed all, with the exception of the churches, the houses of Bishop Pompallier, the Rev. Mr. Dudley, and a few others.

There were killed of the 96th Regiment, four privates, whose names are Miller, Giddens, Jackson, and Ireson.

Privates Duross, Welton, Gutteridge, Scott, and Morris, were severely wounded.

The conduct of the soldiers of the Regiment throughout the affair, was in every respect praiseworthy, and honorable to themselves and the Regiment.

The sergeant of marines, a private, and four seamen, were killed.

Mr. Tapper, the signal man, was severely wounded, fighting bravely.

The inhabitants were conveyed to Auckland in H. M. S. *Hazard*, the U. S. S. *St. Louis*, the Captain of which kindly went to Auckland for the purpose, and the whaler *Matilda*. Many had determined to leave the colony; a considerable number arrived here by the *Slains Castle*, and the *Matilda* was about to proceed to London.

The Legislative Council met on the 15th, when the Governor laid before the members the official accounts of the attack, and the following resolution was adopted on the motion of the Attorney General:

"That the Barracks be immediately made impregnable against musketry, and sufficient as a place of refuge for the inhabitants of Auckland—and that the Male Population of the Settlement be sworn in as special constables and efficiently armed, and that such arrangements and preparations be made, that such armed force can be brought into active service at the shortest notice under experienced and efficient leaders."

The insurgent natives had threatened an attack upon Auckland.

GREAT BRITAIN.

By the *Elizabeth* we have English papers to the 10th December.

Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Albert, and the Royal Family, were in the enjoyment of perfect health.

The court had gone into mourning in consequence of the death of her Royal Highness Princess Sophia Matilda, who expired at her mansion on Blackheath on Friday the 6th December, in the 72nd year of her age. Her Royal Highness was the daughter of the Duke of Gloucester, brother to George III.

The London Gazette of the 6th December announces a further prorogation of Parliament from the 12th December to Tuesday, 4th February.

A most extensive robbery took place at the banking-house of Messrs. Rogers and Co., on the night of the 25th November. The amount stolen was £43,425, consisting of one hundred and sixty-nine £5 notes—£845; forty £10 notes—£400; thirty-seven £20 notes—£740; seventeen £30 notes—£510; twelve £40 notes—£480; nine £50 notes, £450; ten £100 notes—£1000; five £200 notes—£1000; five £300 notes—1500; one £500 note; and thirty-six £1000 notes—£36,000. £3000 reward, and a pardon, were offered to any accomplice who might give information to procure the conviction of his partners in crime.

An address from the Dean and Chapter of Exeter had been addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, requesting him to call a convocation of Bishops, to take the subject of Puseyism into consideration.

The contest for the American Presidency was decided in favour of Mr. Polk, foremost in whose policy are the annexation of Texas to the United States, the support of the institution of slavery, and, to use his own words, "such a tariff for revenue as will yield a sufficient amount to the Treasury to defray the expenses of Government economically administered." This decision does but little honour to the great federal constitution.

It is said the cabinet is meditating a complete change in the government of India, by introducing a measure next session tantamount to the extinction of the political power of the court of directors.

The elections in Canada have given Sir Charles Metcalfe a good working majority.

Public baths, and washing houses for the poor, in the crowded districts of London, are in course of erection.

The Duke d'Aumale was married to his cousin the Princess Marie Caroline of Salerno, daughter of the Prince of Salerno, the brother of the Queen of the French, and uncle of the King of Naples, on the 26th of November.

The Election of Chief Rabbi for London had taken place. Here is the return of the votes:—Rev. Dr. Adler, 121; Rev. Dr. Hirschfeld, 13; Rev. Rabbi Hirsch, 2.—Three Synagogues declined voting.

The Queen has been pleased to direct letters patent to be passed under the Great Seal, granting the dignity of Knight of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland unto William Westbrook Burton, Esq., Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Madras.

Sir H. Pottinger was sworn, by command, on the 28th November, of Her Majesty's most honorable Privy Council.

In the obituary we notice the deaths of the Earl of Limerick, Rear Admiral Cochrane, Generals Hon. Frederick St. John and Sir Leonard Greenwell, Lieutenant Generals Sir J. Cameron, Hon. Sir R. H. Dundas, Colonel Sir C. W. Dance, the Honorable R. O. Cave, M. P. for Tipperary, Colonel Sir J. H. Seale, M. P., and Sir A. W. Calcott, R. A. By the death of the Earl of Limerick, the Hon. W. T. Pery, formerly a clerk in the Sydney Post Office, and recently Assistant Superintendent of Norfolk Island, has succeeded to the title.

The wool market was rather flat—but there was no alteration in prices.

PROCLAMATION.

By his Excellency Sir George Gipps, Knight, Captain General and Governor in Chief of the Territory of New South Wales, and its Dependencies, and Vice Admiral of the same, &c., &c.

Whereas the Legislative Council of this Colony stands prorogued to Tuesday, the 15th of April; and it is expedient further to prorogue the same; now, therefore, I, Sir George Gipps, Governor of the Colony of New South Wales, do hereby order and proclaim that the said Legislative Council shall be, and hereby is, further prorogued to Tuesday, the 6th of May next.

Given under my hand and seal at Government House, Sydney, this 29th day of March, in the year of Our Lord 1845, and in the 8th year of her Majesty's reign.

(L. S.) GEORGE GIPPS.

By his Excellency's command,
E. DEAS THOMSON.
God save the Queen!

SQUATTER SONGS.

NO. II.

I had a noble station
As any in the land—
Its hills were free from gibbers,
Its valleys free from sand!
But what of this? since I rode
The creek three miles adown,
There sat, like Mordecai the Jew,
One curst Tom Brown!
Tom Brown, who
With his five mile of a run,
Cut my hundred thousand acre one
Almost in two.

I courted the Commissioner;
I feasted him; and when
He praised my finest pony,
I gave it to him then:
I gave it to him, hoping he
Would aid me in the down
I had upon the station of
This curst Tom Brown!
Tom Brown, who
With his five mile of a run
Cut my hundred thousand acre one
Almost in two.

But ah! the false Commissioner,
He failed me at the last!
Tom Brown remained and flourished,
While I was breaking fast!
My station grew so hateful then,
I came to live in town,
And took to grog, and dice, and all
Through that Tom Brown!
Tom Brown, who
With his five mile of a run,
Cut my hundred thousand acre one
Almost in two.

At last I sold my station;
And now with nought to do,
And still a little money,
I drink till all is blue!
And lo, the grimest of the Fiends
That haunt me up and down,
Is like—even in its blueness like!
That d—d Tom Brown!
Tom Brown, who
With his five mile of a run,
Cut my hundred thousand acre one
Almost in two.

SONNETS DEDICATED TO SENATORS.

NO. XII.

"Bardolph.—The gentleman being, as we say, "fap" (drunk), his conclusions passed the barriers (proper limits)."

Surely some spirit of Folly that hates man
Was prevalent in Windsor, in the shape
Of high-drugg'd Rump, tis likely, when Bill Ape
Was therein chosen to go forth a statesman!
Yes; and what's more, Bill, you were surely "fap," sir,
When weening first, so much Acrastus flatters,
Your genius fitted you for public matters
As well almost as for a public tap, sir!
What though your sheep were numberless indeed,
Even richer yet were many a greater gaby!
Nor would you therefore a right national stay be!
Fine flocks are well,—but more Australia's need
Asks now of Providence a nobler breed
Of men, sir; men!—as unlike you as may be.
A HAWKESBURY BOY.

ATLAS.

Atlas, we read in ancient song,
Was so exceeding tall and strong,
He bore the skies upon his back
Just as a pedlar does his pack;
But as a pedlar overpressed
Unloads upon a stall to rest:
Or when he can no longer stand,
Desires a friend to lend a hand;
So Atlas, lest the ponderous spheres
Should sink, and fall about his ears,
Got Hercules to hear the pile,
That he might sit, and rest awhile.
Yet Hercules was not so strong
Nor could have borne it half so long.
The Squatters are in this condition,
Their leader is a politician
Though Low[e], a pillar of the state
B[u]joy'd up but sinking 'neath his fate.
Suppose then Atlas ne'er so wise;
Yet, when the weight of Squatting lies
Too long upon his single shoulders,
Sink down he must or find upholders.

JOHNATHAN SWIFT.

City Council.

MONDAY.

Mr. Fisher brought up a report from the Improvement Committee, on the petition of John Kellick, complaining that by the laying of the kerb-stone in Margaret-place, as at present being carried on by the City Surveyor, he should suffer loss in his property in that situation.

The report was read and received. At a subsequent hour a similar petition from David Anderson was ordered to be taken into consideration at the same time as the report presented on Kellick's claim.

Mr. Thurlow presented a report from the By-law Committee recommending certain amendments in the Market By-laws, with respect especially to the charges for sheds. The report was read and received.

The petition of certain householders in Phillip-street, praying that kerb-stones might be laid down in that street, was referred to the Improvement Committee.

A letter was read from the City Treasurer, relative to the state of the funds of the Corporation, from which it appeared that some of the cheques of the Corporation had been dishonoured when presented.

The Town Clerk stated, that it was not a fact that the cheques had been dishonoured; they had been subsequently paid.

The City Treasurer having been called, stated, that the clerk at the Bank of Australasia, had on some cheques being presented to him, refused to initial them, but the

cheques had subsequently been paid; he considered the refusal to initial a dishonouring of the cheques.

From other statements made it appeared that there was at present a balance of £115 to the credit of the City fund, and £1114 to the credit of the Police Fund; in other words, money received back on account of advances made to the Police, and repaid by the Government.

It was ordered that £92 10s. be paid to Mr. Charles Roberts, being one quarter's rent for the Town Hall; also for the payment of £217 14s. 6d. being the salaries of officers and servants of the Corporation for month of March.

A Committee consisting of Alderman Broughton, Councillors Thurlow, Sillitoe, Coyle, Josephson, and Fisher, was appointed to consider and report upon the City Treasurer's Letter and the circumstances connected therewith.

The Mayor stated, that he had never been applied to on the subject of the cash credit of £3000 at the Bank of Australasia, which, however, still existed, and on which, if there were necessity, which there was not at present, drafts might be made.

The Council resolved into a Committee to consider the amended Report of the Water Committee

Alderman Macdermott, said that in order to meet the necessities of the citizens, and to afford a due supply of water, it was requisite that pipes should be laid down of a much larger bore than those at present laid down, and therefore he moved "That in the opinion of the Committee it was expedient that a pipe of nine-inch bore should be laid down."

Mr. Fisher seconded the motion, which was carried.

Alderman Macdermott stated, that in order to carry out the objects of the Corporation, it would be necessary to have a steam-engine to raise the water to the requisite level to supply the citizens; he therefore moved "That in the opinion of the Committee it was expedient that a steam-engine and other necessary apparatus be provided."

Seconded and carried: and the Council having resumed, the report was received.

On the motion of Mr. Fisher, the Assessment list for Phillip Ward be referred to the Town Clerk for publication, and the Council adjourned.

Original Correspondence.

THUNDER STORMS.

To the Editor of the "Weekly Register."

SIR—The occurrence of a "thunder storm" last evening reminded me of an observation which I have made regarding those phenomena, and of which I would wish to see a satisfactory explanation. This is, that they invariably approach from the westward, and proceed eastwardly. During a five years' residence in the colony I have seen no exception to this—having never observed one rise northward of N. W. or southward of S. W. Repeated experience of this fact had so convinced me of the improbability of any deviation from it taking place, that, in the country, where the remark was chiefly made, I found it frequently possible to avoid a squall by turning aside to the N. or S. when in the bush, after a careful investigation of the

point from which it approached. If it came from due west its velocity rarely admitted of escape—shelter at hand was then the desideratum. The farther north or south of this cardinal point, the less distant, in the opposite direction, was the place to seek safety: a line distinct and well defined marked to the observer's eye the progress of the desolating tornado; outside of which is mostly calm and sunshine, while the deepest gloom and desolation characterizes all within. A squall or hurricane is sometimes seen to originate to the E. of the observer. When this is the case no apprehension need be felt for any thing to the westward: the tobacco leaves may remain exposed to the sun; nor is there any danger that the dial's face will suffer the slightest obscuration. As the dense mass accumulates, and stretches out its bulk to the north and south, the decreasing loudness of the thunder and the gentle breeze from the west felt by the spectator, as it fills the vacuum, indicate the departure of the dreaded visitor in its appointed and, it would seem, unchanging course. For the correctness of this statement many remarkable hurricanes might be referred to, of which I have made memoranda, but I prefer stating the fact to occupying so much of your valuable space as that would require. My remarks were made at a distance of not more than forty or fifty miles inland, and between the parallels of 34 deg. and 35 deg.: whether there is any difference in a more northerly or southerly latitude is a problem I have not been able to solve, never having been fortunate enough to meet one who had given the matter a moment's thought. I confess myself unable to account for such an uniformity in the progress of those vapoury and electrical accumulations, but so satisfied am I of its being in accordance with a guiding law of nature, that I should almost as soon expect the sun to rise in the west as to see a thunder squall rise in the east and proceed westerly.

Any communication on the subject from some of your able correspondents cannot fail to be interesting, and it is hoped some such may appear in your truly patriotic and valuable journal. I remain, Sir, &c.,

G. N.

Kensington-st., April 3, 1845.

Domestic Intelligence.

ST. VINCENT AND AUCKLAND.—Some misapprehension appearing to exist with regard to the proper polling-places for the Electoral District of St. Vincent and Auckland, his Excellency the Governor is pleased to direct the attention of the electors to the proclamation of the 4th of May, 1843, in which the following are stated to be the polling-places for the above electoral district, including those appointed by the Governor and Council, 6 Victoria, No. 16, viz:—Braidwood, Broulee, Jervis Bay, and Ulladulla.—*Government Gazette, April 4.*

LICENSED CABMEN.—The conduct of the present class of Sydney cabmen has been pretty often before the public of late, and some circumstances that have come to our knowledge convinces us that they require to be placed under a more strict discipline than that by which they are at present regulated. We had occasion twice of late to engage vehicles of this kind, and twice was it attempted to extort an additional sum from us under the pretext that the distance agreed

for was misunderstood. The first time we submitted to the imposition to save trouble. The second rascal we paid in his own coin. But that which more particularly induces us to notice the subject is an occurrence of this kind which took place on Wednesday during the thunderstorm. As we were passing along when the thunder and lightning were at their height, we heard a discussion between a cabman and two ladies whom he had driven out of town. They had arrived at some distance from any houses, and the cabman, as we gathered from what we overheard, would proceed no further until he received an additional sum; thus working upon their fears of the lightning and rain to extort more than they had agreed for. One error of the system is, that the owner's name does not appear to be painted on each vehicle, so as to facilitate the punishment of frauds of this description, which we must conclude are of every day occurrence. We hope the city council will look into this matter.

THE QUEANBEYAN MAIL ROBBERY.—Intelligence arrived in Sydney on Monday that Thomas Biddle, charged with being the principal actor in the robbery of the Queanbeyan Mail, had been apprehended by Mr. Witts, Chief Constable of the Queanbeyan district. It appears when apprehended Biddle denied his name, and asserted that it was Thomas Carroll. He has, however, been recognised as Biddle. Amongst other property found on him there were nine or ten of the cheques and orders stolen from the mail bags, also several memoranda which will enable the police to trace his progress, and which will probably lead to the conviction of some of the parties with whom he has been on terms of intimacy since the affair of the Queanbeyan mail. The total value of the monetary documents found on Biddle is upwards of £160.

DRAY ROBBERY.—On the 24th ult., a dray was robbed on the Yass Road, about half a mile from Norfolk Farm, by two armed and masked bushrangers, who having effected their purpose made their escape. Troopers Baywell and Skelton, of the Goulburn division of the Mounted Police, went in pursuit and succeeded in capturing them on the Gunning Ranges, and recovered a considerable quantity of property. Their names are James Pending, a runaway from the South Head Road party, and James Magina, a free man.

ANOTHER STILL.—Captain Browne and Mr. D'Arcy, inspectors of distilleries, proceeded, on information, to the Seven Mile Hollow, on the Liverpool-road, within 1000 yards of which, in a most ingeniously constructed cave on the Canterbury estate, they found a still, head, and worm, perfectly new, together with a number of vessels and a quantity of wash, the latter of which they destroyed, and lodged the still, &c., in the stores at Carters' Barracks. The proprietor, Abranam Woolley, was in the cave when they entered it.

THE EMIGRANT SHIP "ELIZABETH."—The *Elizabeth* arrived on last Monday evening with 300 bounty emigrants. They consist of 211 adults, 102 of whom are married, and the others single; of the latter 44 are females and 56 males. The remaining 90 are children under fourteen years of age; among whom two deaths and one birth have occurred, which are the only ones since leaving Liverpool, from which place she has come direct.