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QUIT RENTS.

I look upon the grinding exaction of Quit Rents as a most discreditable perversion of the Royal prerogative.—Mr. Lowe's Address to the Electors of St. Vincent and Auckland.

So little sympathy does there exist between the press of this Colony and the Colonial public, that several of the censors of the above address had treated this allusion to the intolerable grievance of Quit Rents as a miserable piece of electioneering clap-trap. The ATLAS has never taken up this subject, because it believed that there could not be a second opinion upon it, and was rather anxious to direct public attention to matters in defence of which something, however feeble, had been attempted to be said, than to this universally admitted and flagrant iniquity.

It is related of the elder Rothschild, that having formed a plan to the success of which the ruin of Coutts' banking-house would mainly contribute, he set about it in the following business-like manner:—He paid into the bank, by many instalments, a sum of £1,500,000, and then when he supposed that this sum had got into circulation he drew a cheque for the whole. But the bankers had been even with him. From the first they saw his drift; they had not touched one farthing of this enormous deposit, and they paid it back to him across the counter without hesitation or remark. Happy would it have been for the settlers of this Colony had their conduct as closely resembled that of the banker, and the dealings of their Governor those of the stock-jobber. But let us not be too hard upon them: the bankers knew that in stock-jobbing everything is fair, but it was reserved for Sir George Gipps to shew that to a Government nothing which is lucrative can be disgraceful. The bankers knew their man; the settlers did not. The bankers knew they were dealing with an insidious enemy; the settlers expected to find in their Governor a mild and beneficent friend. They have been effectually cured of their simplicity. The presumption henceforth will be that every one who comes to govern this Colony, comes with the deliberate intention of ruining it. His best actions will be watched with jealous suspicion, and his best intentions misconstrued and discredited. And for this embittering of the public mind against those who ought to be its leaders, this incurable estrangement between the Governor and the governed, we have in great measure to thank the discreditable perversion of the Royal prerogative in the matter of Quit Rent. In the first place, these Quit Rents were imposed, we believe, under the understanding that they were to be taken in lieu of other taxation; and, in the next place, it is clearly inequitable to insist upon the grantee performing his part of the agreement, and to leave the grantor at liberty to vary the conditions to be performed on his part at his pleasure. But has the grantor adhered to his part of the agreement? No; he has departed from it in every conceivable manner. 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, 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. Again, when Quit Rents were imposed there were no District Councils in the land; in those happy days it was not considered fair that because a man possessed a small piece of land the Government should call on him to do everything necessary to make other land profitable to its proprietor, the Government. This was a discovery reserved for our times, and we think it rather hard that the philosophers who made it did not simultaneously enunciate the corresponding proposition, that from that moment Quit Rents must cease for ever. But no; progress with us goes only one way, every thing to increase our burdens, nothing to lighten them. Every thing to enrich the Government; nothing to give a chance to the people. But if the Quit Rents had been as just in their beginning and continuance as they are unquestionably the reverse, why were they allowed to run into arrear? Was it to be expected that the settlers should force their contributions into the coffers of a reluctant Government, or that they should invest the sum due year by year in a sinking fund, to meet the demand whenever it should please the Government to call upon them; and could any human sagacity foresee that which has actually happened—that the Government would emulate the farsighted policy of Baron Rothschild, and take advantage of its own negligence to make a demand which might have been met if called for as the instalments accrued; but to ask for which in the lump was mere mockery? The Royal prerogative of being barred by no statute of limitations, with which the law books tell us Her Majesty is clothed, because the law intends that she is ever busy for the good of her subjects, has been strained in this Colony for their destruction; and that power which the law denies to a vindictive creditor, has been deemed, by those who misrepresent her here, not unworthy our gracious Sovereign. They have a proverb in India, that if you wish to ruin a man you should give him an elephant. Our Government seems to have caught at this principle. It is not in the giving vein, certainly; but it neglects to take, that it may extort—and forbears to extort only that it may destroy. 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, and this detestation will be increased by the reflection that these cruel exactions have been resorted to not to supply a revenue which could not otherwise be provided, but because the money thus extorted would be at the absolute disposal of the Governor, and withdrawn from that of the representatives of the people.

MESMERIC PHENOMENON.

As when the Leader of a Coach falls ill
Some cart-horse is impressed his place to fill,
That well is used to drag the sledge or plough,
But of a trot had never dreamt till now!
The sluggish beast, with slow reluctant pace,
Hangs to the pole and swings the loosened trace,
Nor words, nor threats, his sullen mood can urge,
Till on his back descends the uplifted scourge;
Then, when he feels the animating goad,
The cock-tail takes in earnest to the road—
Shakes his long dirty mane with airs and graces,
And inly wonders at his new found paces,
Nor dreams the power that makes him lightly trip
Resides entirely in the coachman's whip—
So when the *Morning Herald*

THAT man would form a very inadequate idea of the services rendered by Luther to religion, or by Bacon to natural philosophy, who should limit them to the precise quantity of good which they were able personally to perform. These men were not only great themselves but were the cause of greatness in others. Thus to the influence of Luther, we owe the efforts

of his brother Reformers, and much also of that reformation in Popery which has undoubtedly taken place since the times of Alexander the Sixth. Even so to compare small things with great is it with the ATLAS. We think we are entitled to take credit, not merely for what we have done ourselves, but for what we have made others do; not merely for what we have written, but for what we have forced others to write. In this spirit of modest appropriation we think we may lay claim to the credit of whatever improvement the last four or five months have effected in our drowsy contemporary the *Morning Herald*. We speak not of the positive merit of his lucubrations, for that we confess is so inappreciable small that it is not worth contending for, but of their relative value at the present time and at the time when the ATLAS first appeared. Compared with all other literary efforts, its articles must still be pronounced worthless, but they are very valuable when compared with what they were. We found the *Herald* full of wrath and indignation against the Council's fawning with clumsy servility on the Governor. His Excellency's visit to the Hunter must have been extremely gratifying to His Excellency—the loyalty that was shown must have been agreeable to his feelings.

Oh! what a candied deal of courtesy,
This fawning greyhound then did proffer him!

At the time that every true friend of the Colony was regretting that the anxiety for local improvement should so far influence the gentlemen of the Hunter, with some honorable exceptions, certainly, as to make them give the power of even misrepresenting the appearance of welcome to one who was sure to distort it into a popular manifestation in his favor. The *Herald* saw nothing in this but an opportunity to air its courtly vocabulary, for some time laid up in ordinary, and to efface, if possible, those disagreeable impressions which a too keen anxiety for squatting advertisements had caused it to make on the Vice Regal mind. But, alas! how are things changed! His Excellency's visit to Illawara, although equally remarkable for the zeal of the improvement-hunting inhabitants, remains unchronicled and uncongratulated. The eloquence of an Osborne has no Homer to celebrate it; and the courtesy of a Gipps must, in this instance, be taken for granted. But if the *Herald* has cooled towards the Governor, it has proportionably warmed towards the Council. On the 30th of December the *Herald* wrote that the measures of the Governor about the Crown Witnesses and Registry Act were faultless. Here are two successive instances of such rabid pestiferous opposition: "Should the vote asked for the department of Registrar General be finally refused, the department will be broken up. They (the Opposition) have done one bad act, and are impatient to do another." "Granting, for *argument-sake*, that the Governor had given sufficient provocation, was this the proper course to take?" Oh! those were glorious days for the *Herald*, such as never never will shine upon it again, when it dared to write thus of the unanimous opinion of the representatives of the people, and there was none to answer him, save ourselves—and we in our tender infancy. But, alas! how transitory is the glory of man. But two short months—it is only on March the 11th—and the same *Herald* recapitulates the same transaction without daring to throw the slightest blame upon the conduct of the Council. That office which we are told on the 30th of December must be shut up, we are told on the 11th of March cannot be so. In December we were told that His Excellency had solemnly declared that he possessed no resources for the purpose, and that there was not a shadow of reason for doubting His Excellency's word on the 11th of March. That he possesses means adequate for the occasion cannot be doubted, and yet we know of no increase of His Excellency's means in the mean time, except the seizure of the schooner *Shanrock*, and a prospective proceeds of the Gundagai allotments, and yet the same proposition is at these not very remote periods absolutely certain one way, and without a shadow of a doubt the other; nay, the very burthen of proof has changed in the mean time. In December it was

only for argument's sake that it could be granted that the Governor was wrong, the presumption being, we suppose, so strong in his favor. In March we read, if *even* the suggestion made by the bitterest enemies of the Council, that this frightful public dilemma is altogether of their creation were true, it would furnish no excuse for the Governor's inaction at the present moment. In short, the Governor and Council have just changed places. In December, even granting for argument's sake the Governor was wrong, the responsibility rested with the Council. In March, even granting for argument's sake that the Council were wrong, the responsibility rests with the Governor. How is this to be accounted for? We will let the public into a secret. Despite his frantic horror of the *Zoist*, we have mesmerised the *Herald*—we found him in a highly inflamed state, burning with a feverish zeal in the cause of the powers that be; but after we had made a few passes he fell into a slumber by no means attended with clairvoyance, in which he remained during the months of January and February, dreaming of lard and other unpleasant matters; when he awoke the symptoms were considerably relieved, and wrath against the Council was replaced by fear of the *Atlas*. The approach of the quarter warned him it was necessary to show spirit, and his usual instinct warned him also to do it as cheap as possible. He therefore selected the Government of Van Diemen's Land, and fulminated against it in a style which possibly a few more mesmeric passes may induce him to employ to our own Government. He has been so kind as to spoil by a feeble and turgid paraphrase our articles on Gundagai, the Registry Office, and several other subjects, and has actually, in the extremity of his despair, purloined, without the slightest acknowledgment, our theory of Colonial misgovernment. Nay, he has aspired to the glory of a libel, and admitted to the columns of his journal things which any one who could so far condescend might make him smart for handsomely. All this is very well; no one is incorrigible who is eager to learn, and the *Herald*, though a most inapt is not an unwilling scholar. We shall be most happy should we be the means of rendering the vehicle of shipping intelligence and advertisements a little more creditable to the literature of the Colony. Content with our present position we aspire not to fill this place ourselves, but only wish, since there must be a daily paper, we should have one of higher moral and intellectual pretensions than the *Sydney Morning Herald*,—on its own showing the bitterest enemy of the Council.

MAJOR HOVENDEN.

BODY FOUND.—Found, on Sunday evening, at Bangarrabee Brush, the remains of a male, apparently of the higher classes. The flesh is entirely gone. On the leather rim of his cap were cut with a knife the words "Frederic Hovenden, died of hunger,"—*Sydney Morning Herald*, Jan 29, 1845.

Of the many instances of ruin and despair, afforded by the victims to the changeable schemes of Australian colonization, the fate of the above-named unfortunate gentleman, presents one of the most recent and most deplorable. Slight as the information is that can now be gathered of all that concerns him, the sad realities are enough to afford wide scope for the most painful reflections.

How lov'd—how valued once, availed him not,
By whom neglected or by whom forgot—

But that a British Field Officer should "die of hunger" in a Colony to which the officers of both services are induced to sell their commissions and to retire, with a view to establish themselves therein, is a circumstance that cannot

Overcome us like a summer cloud,
Without our special wonder!

Can it have been that having sold his commission after a life of service, this unfortunate officer, knowing no better than most other new arrivals how to save his little all, and finding perhaps that by the last change he could only receive a fourth part of the land he might have had at the time he first made up his mind to retire, "fell, lingering fell, a victim to despair?" From what we see around us, we may indeed conclude that in money matters he was no match for the sharp people of this Colony. That settling with any prospect of independence was quite impossible, and being too proud to work, to beg ashamed, he preferred to "die of hunger." Yes! such, we are convinced, is the rough outline of the history of him from whose fate, already almost forgotten here, we cannot withdraw our sympathies, nor cease to connect them with painful comparisons between the fortunes of those whom their country should reward for their services, and of those it has disgorged for their crimes. The Romans appreciated more justly the value of those in whom the strength of their empire consisted, and took care to establish them wherever their presence gave strength. They colonized, in fact, "earth's remotest regions," by employing whole armies to make roads, legions to erect bridges, leaving thus the noblest monuments of their power in works of the greatest utility to mankind. The advantages that would accrue to Great Britain by making retired officers of the Navy and Army the very bones and marrow of her colonization—the chief corner stones of colonial edifices, are too obvious to require enumeration here. The beggarly remission-money, and even the extent of land formerly held out as an inducement to officers to retire to settle in the colonies, has often struck us with surprise as no equivalent to the services of men who had preferred nobly to toil in the field of honor, to the pursuit of gain. Justice to that nice sense of honor, and honest pride, which distinguishes the profession of arms, required such a footing to be given in land as would ensure to all such an independent position in Colonial society.

It is an undoubted truism, even in the case of

the poor old Soldier,
Obliged to beg through realms his valour saved.

That in no branch of the public service is the emolument so scanty as in the pay of the Army and Navy. Even in the ostensible reason for this, the private means possessed by most officers, we find a powerful argument in favour of those who have not, that they, having struggled through a life of service under such a disadvantage, should at least in their latter days, and in a Colony far from the country they served, enjoy some independence, and feel that their children may have some something besides their fathers' hard-earned honors to support them. Yet how different is their lot; and how

little have their interests been cared for in framing the late land regulations! Certain specified sums had been allowed according to the gradation of ranks, *e. g.*, to field officers of twenty years' service and upwards, £250; to captains of twenty years' service and upwards, £200; but will it be believed, that when the price of land was raised from 5s. an acre, first to 12s. and then to 20s. per acre, the remission money was not raised in proportion, and consequently the promise to retiring officers fell to the value of one acre for every four, so that instead of one thousand acres the field officer could only purchase two hundred and fifty acres; the captain, instead of eight hundred acres, now only two hundred acres, and that at the risk of competition!—a great temptation truly to the proud independent stomach of a British officer to withdraw from his country which owed him laurels, and accept gum trees at her antipodes instead! In a country where loyalty, honourable behaviour, and the sentiments of gentlemen ought to be cherished both by precept and example; it is surely bad economy, to say nothing of the inhumanity of the thing, to be so niggardly of land which cost the Mother-country nothing, as not to give enough of it, to preclude even the bare possibility of such men being reduced to beggary and "dying of hunger." And what must have been Major Hovenden's deep regrets before he did so perish? His recollections of the "pride, pomp, and circumstances of glorious war," contrasted with his last condition—dying like a dog in a ditch—in solitary wretchedness. And this is the end of a gentleman who had passed his life in the service of his country, and attained the rank of Field Officer! a higher rank in fact than that of the gentleman sent out here to represent our beloved Sovereign, and who has acted as if it was his policy to put monarchy out of fashion, and make its delegated authority as distasteful as possible. Nothing else could have been expected by those who have any faith in Sir Francis Head's narrative. Tried servants of the state should be selected to place at the head, at least of such Colonies; but if we would estimate by any such criterion as that the value Britain sets upon them, we should be more at a loss still; for the lands at the Cape, governed by a Napier, are valued at 2s. per acre only, ours at 20s. per acre, or ten times as much; whereas the united services of a Gipps, a Latrobe, a Grey, and a Wilmot, together, would be outweighed, not only by those of any one Napier, but by the services of any Naval Captain or Field Officer of any standing in the service. Nevertheless, in Colonies so governed, the price of land has been raised four hundred per cent, so that a fourth part only of what was formerly allowed falls to officers who have served in the Army or Navy. That is to say, such services appear to have fallen to twenty-five per cent of their former value. In the minor appointments we need scarcely observe it is unnecessary to look for any traces of a better order of things. Proofs that it is easier to rise in this Colony by the scabbard than by the sword are but too conspicuous, while the contemplation of that easy way, that *via lactea*, by which political subserviency has found access to a judgment-seat, is by no means likely either to warm our patriotism, or inspire that public spirit, the want of which, alas! all have seen so much occasion to deplore. These are mere natural consequences, when men of mediocrity represent "Excellency," and when past services to the nation are at such a discount; whereas, if such governments and appointments were made the appropriate rewards of virtue, or meritorious public service of some kind or other, the effect of such examples could hardly fail to benefit society. Field officers would no longer die of hunger, while clerks of Government works received from wealthy contractors pieces of plate, and basins of soup.

These remarks may appear invidious, but in a land to which the best and bravest of our countrymen are invited to retire, giving up at once their profession and their country—that any such should actually starve, is too much to be passed over in silence. A country in which the veteran soldier, too, has been deprived of his pension, and been forced to beg—not "through realms his valour saved," where he might have got something, but through houseless wilds, where loyalty, we fear, will not be found to shew much sympathy for him. Can anything be done more calculated to degrade society? Can any jobbery be more palpable and gross than the promotions to which we have alluded? Can corruption be too strong a term for such a preference—where gentlemen who have carried arms in their country's service "die of hunger!" If rulers with "reform" on their lips, and aversion to "all jobs" for their pretended rule of Government, have been the authors of these things, we would ask the world at large whether the press ought not to notice them—and in unequivocal terms, too—where there is not yet a *vox populi* to cry shame on such hypocrisy, such injustice.

Such are some of the reflections connected in our minds with the sad fate of the subject of our present notice. They recur to us again and again, without one consolatory sentiment or ray of hope. Unlike the sacrifice of Curtius, no chasm will close by the immolations (too numerous, we fear!) and broken hearts of the best and bravest of our countrymen in New South Wales. It is a sad and sickening subject, and we can dwell on it no longer.

If, under such a state of things, the British Colonial Empire can do honour to the Mother-country, or prosper itself, we shall readily admit our utter ignorance of human nature, and relinquish all pretensions to common sense. We see not in what is visible around us any reason to doubt the evidence of our senses. As night follows day, so the falling off in the revenue, and emigration to other shores, seem but the natural effects of natural causes. "Your money or your life!" now best expresses the policy of this Government.

You take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.

COLONIAL WINE.

The stewards awarded no prize for the wine at the Horticultural Show; the reason of this we understand to be, that it was made according to the following receipt, which, "as we are," as the *Herald* says, "always anxious for the good of the Colony:" we annex,

Of Epsom salts and vinegar
And sulphur equal shares,
Of water twenty times as much
Flavoured with rotten pears.

TIMON'S FEAST.

Those who are acquainted with the accurate and retentive memory with which Mr. Windeyer is gifted, will not readily believe, in the absence of strict proof, that any statement deliberately made by him is incorrect, still less will those acquainted with the proceedings of last session doubt his accuracy when he states that this last session instead of asking the Council to make provision for the Courts of Justice, the Governor took the £20,000 secured to them by the Schedule, and then asked for £8,000 more in the lump, and yet of this statement the *Herald* says that it is not correct it is utterly incorrect. We say on the other hand, adopting as nearly as possible the elegant phraseology of our cotemporary, that it is correct, and therefore neither utterly nor in any other way incorrect. The question on which we are at issue is, whether the Governor asked the Council for the surplus in a lump. To prove that he did, we beg to refer to the speech of the Colonial Treasurer in bringing forward the Judicial Estimates, which occupies exactly 17½ lines of the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 30th of August, 1844. "The Colonial Treasurer brought forward the estimate for the Judicial department, and the expenses of the administration of Justice. By the Act of Parliament there was reserved for these purposes £20,000, but it had been found necessary to propose an additional sum of upwards of £7,000, and the vote which the Committee had come to last evening on the subject of the Registrar General's department, namely, that it ought to be placed on the estimate for the Administration of Justice, had rendered it necessary to make a still further increase. The sum which it would now be necessary to provide was £28,635 5s. 10d., and he would move that that sum be appropriated to defray the expenses of the Administration of Justice, in addition to the sum of £20,000 reserved by the Act of Parliament."

Was not this asking for the surplus in a lump? If not there is no meaning in language. But says the *Herald*, the estimate is as minute as an estimate ever was; it contained 86 items; what fairer course could the Governor adopt? We will tell the *Herald*. The Governor not only might have made out a minute estimate, but he might have placed that estimate so made out at the disposal of the Council. He might not merely have set the banquet before them, but invited them to eat. Timon invited his false friends to a banquet, the table was sumptuously covered (perhaps with 86 dishes), he concluded his grace with the following words:—"The rest of your fees, O Gods, the Senators of Athens, together with the common lag of people (query the common people of lags?); what is amiss in them ye Gods make suitable for destruction. For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing they are welcome. Uncover dogs and lap." The dishes uncovered are full of warm water.

May you a better feast never behold,
You hot-of-mouth fiends; smoke and lukewarm water
Is your perfection. This is Timon's last,
Who stuck and spangled you with flatteries,
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces
Your reeking villainy.

Such we may imagine would have been the oration of his Excellency to the Council, on bringing forward the Judicial estimate, had not inexorable custom obliged him to entrust the matter to the vicarious eloquence of the Colonial Treasurer. Here, he might have said, is the banquet set out, but touch a dish of it at your peril. You think that they are full of food for your appropriation, but you will find them full of nothing but scalding water; you must not touch them, but I have no objection to throw them at your heads." And we can imagine him winding up his oration, like Timon, with the following denunciation:—

Burn house, sink Sydney, henceforth hated be
Of Stephen, Gipps, and all bureaucracy.

But had the *Herald* fallen in with any of Timon's discomfited guests, he would probably have remonstrated with them in the following manner:—"You say, gentlemen, that he asked you to dinner, and then, so far from giving you any, threw the empty dishes at your heads and kicked you out. This is not correct, it is utterly incorrect. We have before us the bill of fare of the dinner. From your assertion one would suppose it had been drawn up in the form 'dinner for 36 people,' but what is the fact? Why the bill of fare is as minute a bill of fare as a bill of fare ever was or can be, beginning with the roast beef and ending with the radishes; the items are 86 in number. We ask any unprejudiced man (you, gentlemen, appear to be a little prejudiced by the beating and hot water), what fairer course could Timon have pursued? What more open course could you have required? The whole bill of fare was before you, and it was quite competent for you to go through the dishes seriatim, and after lapping, as you were directed to do, as much hot water as you pleased out of each of them, then to come to a vote, that the dinner did or did not come up to the expectations formed of it from the bill of fare. But what better usage could you have expected to have received from so great a man as Lord Timon, the hater of all mankind except the Legislative Council of New South Wales."

FINE WRITING.

"If a gentleman who has resided in the Colony full twenty years—a gentleman of superior education and intelligence—a barrister—a judge—a CHIEF JUSTICE—may be deemed competent to form a sound judgment on this question, then must the above testimony be held conclusive."

THERE'S a climax for you; the figure of the Chief Justice seems to dilate and swell into more than supernatural grandeur, and the puny writer to shrivel into more than ordinary insignificance, parched by the fire of his own burning rhetoric, and sinking under the weight of his own tremendous logic. And yet when the overpowering effect of this glorious burst of eloquence has a little passed away, it will occur that a residence of twenty years in these Colonies is not the best way to learn how the duties of Juror are performed in the rest of the world, and that even if a gentleman possessing the appalling accumulations of advantages enumerated be competent to form a judgment on this question, does it follow that his testimony is conclusive, and that the elevation of a Judge to be a Chief Justice does not render his testimony more valuable. This comes of fine writing.