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THE LEVEE.

They were stripped naked, and compelled to dance before the image of the God to whom they were to be offered.

Robertson's History of the Conquest of Mexico.

AND Ye can prate of Liberty! and Ye  
Glow on the page that woos you to be free!  
Nor dream the language of the brave and true,  
How worse than meaningless to things like you.  
Bind ye with fetters?—Cobwebs were too strong  
To chain a craven made to bend to Wrong.  
Plunge ye in dungeons?—All between the Poles  
Is one wide dungeon to your dastard souls.  
Fright ye with bayonets?—Valor would not deign  
With blood so cold her flashing steel to stain.  
Bribe ye with treasure?—Tyrant, spare thy store,  
A bow can bribe—and what can treasure more?

Where are they now—the voluble, the loud  
Against thy rule? They saw thy face, and bowed—  
Forgot their Wrongs—their Ruin—their Despair;  
Saw but thy shrine—and flocked to worship there.  
Amid the pageant of that mimic state  
He stood, in all the dignity of Hate—  
Hate, which He never deigned in smiles to clothe,  
Like the poor slaves, who fawn—on what they loathe.

Yes! ye may fawn—but never will unnerve  
His steadfast purpose from its aim to swerve:  
That aim—so steadily—so sternly—sought—  
End of his acts—and object of his thought—  
That aim, your ruin—vain your craven prayer,  
He knows your hate—then wherefore should he spare?  
Ye might have checked—ye bowed before his car,  
And it will crush ye—like the worms ye are.

THE LEVEE.

Magnus  
Mirandasque cliens sedet ad prætoria regis,  
Donec Bythyno libeat vigilare tyranno.  
Juvenal.

It is not the province of a newspaper, at any rate, it is neither our principle nor practice to misrepresent facts, or to elude the inferences which obviously follow from them. The cause of truth, of which we profess ourselves the independent advocates, is best served by sincerity and openness—we leave sophistry and misrepresentation to those whose cause requires them. However impolitic, therefore, it may appear—however gratifying to the Governor and his friends, to the Sydney Morning Herald and its admirers, if it have any, and to the enemies of the Colony in general, we must candidly admit, that the cause of liberty and good government in this Colony has recently sustained a signal and disastrous defeat. Notwithstanding all we could urge, notwithstanding the apparent inability of any one to answer the arguments we brought forward, our triumph of logic has been a barren one—our worst anticipations have been more than realized. The levee of the Governor, on the eve of the putting in force of the Squatting regulations, at the very time when the District Council of Grant under his direction is seeking to confiscate the property of a whole district—has been most numerous and respectably attended. It is not for the numbers which we care so much for, for by descending a little lower than usual in the scale of society, a recruit of numbers is easily obtained, but we have to record, with mingled feelings of indignation and regret, that after the signal insult put upon them last

year, an insult which has neither been explained, apologized for, or withdrawn, eight elective members of Council were found so little careful for the honor of the body to which they belong, and for the respect due to themselves as its members, as to attend at a levee where they were placed on a level with all other public bodies, or bodies calling themselves such. So far from the insult of last year having been withdrawn, it seems to us to have been repeated. The Speaker of the Legislative Council, who was a member of the former body, and an old official, has hitherto always received the compliment of the entree, but was this year excluded, for no other reason, that we know of, than because he filled that honorable office. Mr. Hannibal Macarthur was the only exception, he was the Gideon's fleece, wet with the dew of Vice-regal bounty, while all around was parched and dry. It is strange that he should have availed himself of this degrading compliment, and stranger that seven other elective members should be found to follow in his steps without any compliment at all. The Bar, with only three exceptions, we believe, containing, however, the two leaders of the profession, followed their example, and, to say truth, no portion of the community was behindhand. From the best analysis we can make, they went for the following reasons. Loyalty, or the folly that goes by that name in New South Wales, a few—servility, a good many—conceit and the opinion that they formed an integral part of an august ceremony, a large number—the desire of showing off new clothes, several—the desire of showing off borrowed clothes, one certainly, to our knowledge, and we doubt not, many others, from regard and respect to His Excellency, and approbation of his measures, the only reasonable motives which could bring any rational being there, no one. It may be asked then, if this be our view of the subject, what harm we think the levee has done. We will call, on this subject, an unexceptionable witness—the Governor himself. Why have his adherents been for the last fortnight, or rather ever since the ATLAS broached the subject, canvassing so diligently for recruits. Why have those, who would not submit to the degradation of going through the mummery of respectful deference to one whose very presence in the Colony is become an evil of no slight magnitude, been besieged and overwhelmed by constant importunities? Is it that His Excellency was anxious, like his tool the Herald, that the Colony should keep up its reputation for loyalty. Sic notus Ulysses? The abstract love of loyalty was not his besetting sin in Canada, and we have too good an opinion of his abilities to fancy that it is here. No, no; Government people canvassed for attendance at the levee, because they knew that attendance at the levee would strengthen the hands of Government. And it has done so in many ways:—first, it has given His Excellency the power which, if he neglect, he is wanting alike to his genius and his fortune, of representing writers and speakers who freely and fearlessly express the opinion of nine-tenths of the community as mere babblers and declaimers, seeking personal reputation and aggrandizement, by adding weight to imaginary grievances. If they really were so, there would be no harm in its being so reported in Downing-street, but when we know that the sentiments of the opposition in Council are those of three-fourths at least of the persons attending the levee, it is melancholy to think that these persons should have given to such misrepresentation so much color and plausibility. Next we observe, that every person exercising any influence in Council, with the exception of Dr. Lang, whose conduct is to us an inexplicable enigma, was absent. This shows how little support the leaders in this Colony have to hope from those whose interests they defend. Thirdly, the large attendance of all classes of people shows how very far this community yet is from being awakened to the truth, that the efficient remedy, for its numberless grievances depends upon its own energy and unanimity. They know that they are wronged, and they have no objection to be righted, provided somebody else will take the trouble of fighting their own battles off their hands. They love freedom, but they make no sacrifice for her. No, not even that of the

unmeaning bowing and scraping match of last Monday. Fourthly, we cannot doubt that the result has greatly braced the somewhat shaken nerves of the Governor. He finds there is no perilous stuff in us—that we may gasconade a little, but are meek and mild at bottom. The more he knows himself disliked, the more safe he must feel, with people whom all their hatred cannot wean from servility. The Herald in exhorting him to meet the Council without delay, seems to imply that the risk attending that step has passed. It very likely may be so, but just in proportion as he gains, the Colony loses. And lastly, a great opportunity of putting an end to the present state of things has been lost. Had our advice been taken—had every man, who cordially and sincerely believes that the policy of the Governor has been, and threatens to be ruinous to us, that his feelings and good wishes are irrevocably alienated from us, and that his remaining longer here is irreconcilable with our very existence, absented himself, the farce of the levee would have been performed to empty benches. It would have been impossible for the Governor, after such a demonstration of opinion, to have remained in this country. The Squatting Regulations, the District Councils, the Quit-Rents, the isolation produced by the state of the roads, the uncertainty and anxiety which every owner of property must feel under the present system, would have been arrested in mid-career, and it would no longer be left to the chapter of accidents to decide whether we are to be a country or no. We should then have established a precedent of significant application to future Governors, that there are limits even to Australian patience. As it is, it is not our fault if they do not consider it an infinite quantity to which nothing can be added by kindness, and from which nothing can be taken by oppression. We now take our leave of this painful subject.

PRINCIPLE OF THE SQUATTING REGULATIONS.

THOSE who wish to understand the true principle of the Squatting Regulations must look for it neither in the professions of abhorrence of the monopoly of the large Squatters which His Excellency embodied in that singularly uncandid and illogical document in which, after making one gentleman an imaginary present of Bargo Brush, he drew some equally illogical conclusions with regard to the working of the Squatting System, based on a total suppression of the fact of the existence of such a thing as assessment. Nor yet from his sympathy with the small Squatters, popularly called grog-sellers and cattle stealers, whom though he loveth wisely he yet loveth not too well. Nor yet from the recommendations sent by the General Hewitt, at once premature and procrastinated, which embodied scarce any tangible principle at all. The real key to this deep and inscrutable mystery is, we believe, to be found in two causes—the one, the restriction of the powers of the Legislative Council to the appropriation of the ordinary revenue only—the other, the rapidly approaching decrease by effluxion of time of the Squatting Act. It required no prophetic eye to see, that a Governor would be able to thwart the wishes of the Council, precisely in proportion to the degree in which he possessed a revenue independent of its control, and that he would be acceptable to the Colonial Office, precisely in proportion in which he was able to conciliate the phantom of a representative assembly, with the substance of that lucrative patronage which the Office has so long enjoyed at our expense. The fallacy of preserving Her Majesty's faith inviolate and respecting Lord Stanley's guarantee made in our behalf without the slightest authority from us, he saw was not likely to be treated with much respect—indeed he has set the example of treating it with utter contempt in the case of Mr. Carter, whose salary is, even now, withheld in direct violation of the instructions of the Colonial Minister. And, yet, how could he hope to stand well with the home authorities if he were not able by some means or another to provide for their friends. What then should he pounce on? The Quit-rents were all very well in their way, but had such a manifest tendency "to use up," as the Yankees say, "their pairs," that

the most heartless financier, the most sanguine speculator on the extremity to which human misery could be lengthened out could not speculate on their continuance. Then there were the smuggling seizures, that admirable and ingenious chemical process, by which a large ordinary revenue was suffered to evaporate, in order that it might be condensed into a few pearly drops or droits of the Crown. This also was good in its way. But would the Council always be foolish enough to vote money for inspectors of distilleries in quantities large enough to be a heavy expense to the Colony, and yet small enough to reconcile to their consciences the augmenting it at the expense of the revenue; for the sake of perpetuating this condensing system, by which the people were defrauded to enrich the Crown, the spy, and the smuggler. There again was a grave question. The license fee, however, presented facilities for the raising of this much desired revenue peculiar to itself. True, the Squatting Act was passed with the distinct understanding, that the license fee would not be raised or augmented. But, what are distinct understandings? nay, what are solemn compacts to governors with an object in view? The license fee was already in existence, and unfettered by the humbug of contract which so obviously detracts from the merit of Quit-rents and the wearisome technicalities of law, which encumber the march of smuggling stood forth in all the nakedness of prerogative. The principle had been half admitted, and no argument could apply to the larger demand which would not equally apply to the smaller, except that drawn from the breach of faith, which the long impunity with which Sir Richard Bourke's compact was violated had perhaps led the Governor to undervalue. As soon as the Act imposing the assessment had expired, it would be easy to replace it by a proportionate increase of the license fee, and thus a revenue would have been created, likely, in the hands of so skilful a financier, to exceed in amount, that at the disposal of the Council, a fact, which doubtless, he fondly anticipated would render them something more than contemptible. The whole essence—the whole principle of these regulations was the increase of the license fee, and the whole principle of the increase of the license fee was the raising a revenue, which might render it unnecessary for the Governor to pay the least attention to the wants and wishes of the people, and render him as independent of them with the new Council as he was with the old.

And, it is for devising this miserable piece of chicanery, this paltry shuffling of the cards, this artful dodging of the revenue from the ledger of the people to that of the Crown, that Sir George Gipps has found persons to compliment him on the principle of his Squatting Regulations. We are well known to be averse to their anticipated practical working. But ruinous as this will be, it sinks into nothing in our opinion compared with the hateful nature of the principle involved in them. We speak not now of raising a revenue by prerogative—that odious precedent was to our eternal disgrace, established long before the 2nd of April, 1844. But we speak of the deliberate encroachment which was contemplated upon the rights of our Council ere the ink of the Constitution was yet well dried. Men may be driven by want of money into arbitrary proceedings, which, in happier times and less extreme necessities they would be the first to regret. But here is no such excuse. The multiplication of license fees was evidently only a part of a system by which it was proposed, not so much to increase the revenue as to raise it from the people without their consent and concurrence, and thus establish a government which might unite the arbitrary power of the last of the Tudors, with the prodigal expenditure of the first of the Stewarts.

#### GIBBON WAKEFIELD.

In London Lecture-room one day  
A magnetised patient lay,  
And wondrous things did do and say.  
All in Mesmeric trance:  
While Acland, Molesworth, Buller stood,  
With many more, in musing mood,  
As this phenomenon they view'd,  
And Science's advance.

When all at once the spell was broke,  
And very serious was the joke;  
It seem'd that Death with subtle stroke  
The *clair-voyance* had ended;  
For Wakefield stood behind the chair,  
And, with the operator's air,  
His arm had wav'd in passes there  
In mockery intended.

To mock, to thwart, to baffle still,  
From what is good, to work out ill;  
Has Gibbon Wakefield tried his skill  
Since before Newgate knew him;  
Abduction there had lodged him fast,  
But his deductions that surpassed,  
And young Australia's hopes did blast  
When Russell listened to him.

Thus bold assurance works its way  
Life's cup to spill—life's currents stay,  
Or darken Science's dawning ray,  
A demon's arts employing,  
To lead the gentle maid astray,  
To mock young Science's dubious way,  
Or with young Colonies to play,  
Deluding and destroying.

#### BREAKERS A-HEAD OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILS.

— Tu nisi ventis  
Debes lullibrium cavere.  
Horace.

So far from being defunct, as the *Herald* would have us believe, the District Council of Grant is alive and kicking in good earnest—though kicking, we fondly and fully believe, against the pricks. The ancient Persians believed that they were the best of men; that those who lived nearest them were the next best, and so on—those who lived farthest off being, of course, the worst. It is only by some such hypothesis as this that we can explain the disgraceful conduct of the District Council of Grant. They are farther removed from the vice regal presence than we, and, therefore, enjoy less of that ennobling and invigorating essence which, especially on levee days, is radiated from the vice regal person of her sacred Majesty's undoubted representative. We were not aware of the advantages we enjoyed till we saw how badly people get on without them! The divinity which doth edge a viceroy is such, that it counteracts the viceroy's own iniquity, and his Excellency carries within himself, by virtue of the royal elixir that is in him, an antidote to those pernicious principles which his natural character would lead him to inculcate. By this ingenious hypothesis we have accounted, much to our satisfaction, for the fact, that his Excellency's influence seems to be the greatest where we should expect it to be least, in the most remote parts of the Colony, and least where we should expect it to be greatest, in the parts immediately adjacent to the vice regal residence.

Without, however, pushing these metaphysical remarks farther, there is no doubt that the District Council of Grant is making an endeavour to tax the people, and as little, that there are a number of persons throughout the Colony who are anxious to extend a similar system to their own districts. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? The Governor places in the hands of the inhabitants of the towns the power of taxing the country districts for their own benefit, and the inhabitants of the towns do not object to use that power.

Considering, however, the real state of the case, we are bound to say that the attempt now making to extort money from the inhabitants of the district of Grant, is something very little short of felonious. Men are not born with the power of wresting their neighbours' property from them. Governors and corporations alike are restricted to certain definite powers, and those powers are to be found in commissions and charters. The District Council of Grant well know that their charter contains no power of distress and sale. There is not even a pretence for saying that the Act of Parliament gives them any such power for any except police purposes, and yet, though fully aware of this, they dare to talk of distress and sales, and seek to perpetrate a gross fraud upon those who have not the leisure or ability to investigate the limits of the authority which they claim to exercise. When Gil Blas and Don Raphale dressed themselves up in the uniforms of alguazils, to carry some of their swindling projects into execution, they rendered themselves liable to the terrors of the Inquisition. If a man personates an officer of justice, and in that capacity possesses himself of the property of his neighbour, we hand him over to the tender mercies of the Attorney General. How flimsy is the distinction between these cases and that of a public body seeking to extort money, by representing itself to possess powers which it knows that it does not possess. A person acting in this manner is rather a felon than a trespasser. Damages in an action at law are too light a punishment for fraud and iniquity so black. That punishment is, however, all which, in the present state of the law, can be inflicted, and we doubt not that, if the Council persevere, it will be inflicted with exemplary severity.

We are well nigh weary of the Cassandra-like part which it has fallen to us to play—the part of warning the people to fly from an evil which they are too vain or too indolent, or too stupid to avoid.

Pleased to the last, they crop their flowery food,  
And lick the hand just raised to shed their blood.

They will not be cautioned—they will not be warned—they will not be saved—while it is in their power, as we have repeatedly shewn, by surrendering their charters, to place themselves, at least for the present, beyond the reach of ruin; they are determined to abdicate the empire over their own destiny, and to yield it up into the hands of the Legislative Council. Are they quite sure that they are safe in so doing—are they quite sure that the Legislative Council, treated as it has been with the basest ingratitude by those who only exist through its refusal to assist in their destruction—seeing, as it must do, that by voting the police expenditure, it is saving, not the districts upon which not one farthing ever can be levied under the present charter, but these miserable councils themselves, from immediate and irretrievable ruin, may not re-consider its vote of last year—may not become weary of fighting the battles of those who are too cowardly to fight their own, and from whom it is vain alike to look for co-operation or gratitude, and hand them over to a merciless executive, which will destroy them with as much compunction as tyrants usually evince towards the broken tools which they have worn out in the service.

It is not for us to forestall the decision of the Legislature on this subject, but an opinion is rapidly gaining ground—that to which the *Atlas* has done its share to contribute—that to allow the District Councils to remain in their present state is full of danger to the Colony, to the districts, and most of all, to the members themselves. In that state, however, they seem determined to remain. The question then arises, whether it is the duty of the Legislature to allow them to remain in their present impotent state, which may at any moment be exchanged for the most frightful activity—or whether it may not be the duty of the Council, by allowing the Government to put the machine into motion, so completely to destroy it, that no tyrant will ever be able to reconstruct it. Strong must be that District Councillor's nerves who can look upon the result of such a deliberation without trembling, and weak his head, if he does not hasten to anticipate its result by his own act. A very few votes would turn the scale; the whole force of the Government on which they fawn is already against them, and a small secession from the opposition would render their ruin irrevocably complete. Once more we say, beware!

#### SONG.

AIR.—Farewell! but whenever you welcome the hour.

Farewell! but whenever we think of the hour  
Which has freed us at last from your person and power.  
We'll think of the despot who ruled o'er us too  
And remember the evils inflicted by you.  
Those woes may return; a new Tool may be sent  
To inflict Councils on us, and levy Quit-rent,  
But we ne'er will forget the hard measures that drew  
Fell ruin on us, forged by Stanley and you.

And if on the morn, when from Sydney you sail  
For home twixt the Heads, with a fair blowing gale;  
We'll think o'er our Heads, how you loved to career.  
To grind us to powder, and rule us by fear.  
To ruin the Squatter by fraud and by guile.  
And though well-known your frown, never seen was your smile:  
Save when Stanley approved your taxation anew,  
And that drew a smile, even, Georgy, from you.

Let fate do her worst, here is nought to destroy,  
No tenure, no land-fund, no runs to enjoy,  
They've melted away 'neath your fostering care,  
And left us abandoned to grief and despair.  
—Long, long be your heart with these memories seared,  
Like the Bagman whose brush is with aniseed smeared,  
He may run, he may shuffle as much as he will,  
But the odour he's daubed with, will stick to him still.

J. L. T.

In qual parte del ciel, &c.

Petrarch.

In what dim regions of Plutonic state  
That type vice-regal did stern Nature mould?  
As if on earth now bidding us behold  
The gathered charms of the Avernian great:  
Could Satyr's brow in horrid grots of old  
In such repulsiveness luxuriate?  
When did one form to such excess enfold  
The germs from which our misery we date?

Who knows not thy persuasives unrelaxing  
Whose plastic powers from grass to guano rove,  
(Blest with a microscopic ease of taxing!)  
G—s! knows not how of place and pelf the Love  
By habit firm, and bold, by license, waxing,  
Their winning rule o'er thy mild spirit prove.

S. Q.

MR. ATLAS—Before crooked turnpikes were introduced into Scotland instead of the old straight roads of that country, a certain place on a certain tract, was so noted in wet weather for its miry character, that it received the emphatic name of the *stables*, on account of the number of carts, &c., which stuck fast there.

Now, the road, or that part of the road leading from Maitland to Patrick's Plains, and lying between "Wright's Inn" and Lochinvar, is for two miles entirely of this character also; for many a cart and dray are stabled there just now. Much cannot be said in favour of the accommodation and less for the entertainment. Plenty of material for posts can be found by the wayside, and the drivers find railing and swearing too in all moods, tempers, and parts of speech. The place is utterly impassable just now. It is quite impossible to give a bad enough account of it in its very bad state; there the drays &c., are sunk to the nave in the soft clay, and the hard hearted knaves of drivers will not put their shoulders to the wheels to help it out. They use, however, plenty of lashing arguments, and if they cannot get out, a little lish is all their comfort. Having been in Sydney, it may be observed that your ways want mending very much in and about the said city. No-one need be told that tolls cannot legally be exacted, exactly on some such roads or rather quagmires. Talk of fining for refusal, a fine story indeed. In Scotland, the good folks there would not only refuse to pay, but prosecute the trustees for neglect or inattention to the keeping up of good roads. In the vicinity there is plenty of sand, not abundantly applied; the roads are often shallow in the centre instead of raised, the waterway filled up, and the most left to nature and nature's care. If a good north-wester would spring up and deposit the sand a foot deep in the middle of the roads it would be conferring a public benefit to the community. But I fear complaints are of no avail; I shall therefore come plainly to the matter and say splash away.

The farmers are improving in their management now a-days. They hold or drive the plough, who some few years ago would have spurned at the proposal. Better late thrive, than never do well. Barley is sown in greater breadth, and in many cases the lands have been twice ploughed, a plan much to be recommended for keeping down weeds, the growth of which are a scandal and reproach to Australian farming; for pulverizing the land, particularly where the soil is strong—and for promoting thereby an absorbent and retentive property, when the rain or moisture falls from the atmosphere—to the thirsty or parched soil; the rains have been rather too plentiful for low lands but on more elevated grounds the brairds are forward and beautiful.

R.

Singleton, May 27, 1845.