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THE ATLAS OF THIS DAY CONTAINS:—

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THE BISHOP'S PETITION.

It is a melancholy fact, that in all ages since the general establishment of Christianity, the most formidable combinations against human progress and human happiness, have been combinations of the clergy. The instances are indeed rare, in which they have exerted themselves in the cause of liberty and civilization. To uphold despotism, to perpetuate ignorance, to establish superstition, to oppose everything calculated to enlighten, and to promote the happiness of, their fellow men, have been almost invariably their leading characteristics. Cruel, selfish, bigotted, arrogant, narrow-minded, and dishonest, beyond the precincts of their own legitimate vocation, they have been amongst the very greatest enemies of their race. The days of active persecution have gone by—the power of interfering with life and liberty has passed away from them, but the spirit which animated their persecuting predecessors still exists in them, and they exert all their power to check where they can no longer control. In no section of them is this more strikingly manifested, than in that once growing but now abject and contemptible body, which the vagaries of Mr. Newman called into existence, but which the strong common sense of the nineteenth century has so completely resisted and put down. The Bishop of Australia and his clergy, as the representatives of the Oxford zealots, have fallen nothing short of those misguided men in either theory or practice, but while striving with all their might to establish clerical domination over this community, they have at the same time resisted some of the most important measures that were ever proposed for its advancement. The system of national education which, in a spirit of wise and comprehensive liberality, some of our ablest men, following in the footsteps of the ablest men in the mother country, endeavoured to introduce amongst us, met with their most determined opposition; and now another measure, calculated in a scarcely inferior degree to advance this community, is attempted to be counteracted by them. Resolute in staying the progress of civilization, they are now banded together to check, if possible, the only steps which, so far as human foresight enables us to see, can save this great and hitherto most successful experiment in colonization, from resulting in a failure as disastrous, as its previous course has been unexampled and magnificent. The first thing that strikes us in the memorial which they have forwarded to her Majesty against the revival of transportation to these shores, is the insufferable arrogance which pervades it. They tell her Majesty that they consider it their duty to state their serious objections to that measure—they declare their persuasion to be, that no supposed benefits to be derived from the introduction of the labor of convicted felons could compensate for the evils, moral, social, and political, which they clearly foresee must result from the establishment of a state of society so unnatural as a penal settlement presupposes and involves—such an attempt they hesitate not to say, would be opposed to the constitutional principles of all disinterested and unprejudiced people—they assure her Majesty that this colony has advanced to a stage of society which renders it an unsuitable receptacle for convicts under any system, or for the employment of their labor in any shape. Passing over the cool assurance of any twenty or thirty people taking upon themselves to sign a memorial of this description,

what are we to think of the language in which it is couched—what of the bold assertions—what of the want of argument or reason which characterize it? What, let us ask, is there in the education, the habits, or the ability of these presumptuous gentlemen, which entitles them to speak so authoritatively upon matters not properly connected with their own peculiar avocations? What right have they to step forward separately from the rest of the community, and claim for their unsupported assurances, a degree of weight and authority which they impliedly deny to the Legislative Council of the colony? Is this the plan which the Bishop adopts for the purpose of showing that aversion to politics which he says prompted him to withdraw from the Executive Council? We are sure that this attempt on the part of these reverend politicians to meddle with what does not concern them, will meet with as much contempt in England as it has already excited here—and that the opinions of the colonists of New South Wales will be sought for in a more legitimate channel, than in the memorial of the Bishop and clergy of “the diocese aforesaid.” “While we admit,” say they, “that the purpose of working a reformation among the convicts formerly sent hither was too generally unsuccessful, we are not of the number of those who go to the length of maintaining that it was a total failure. We have no desire to seek for arguments against the renewal of transportation, by exaggerating the evils of the former system.” In other words they tell us they have no desire to state deliberate falsehoods respecting the subject of transportation, but that there is no doubt it has been too generally unsuccessful. We pass over the virtuous disclaimer of any intention to tell lies—it well becomes the body which makes it—and we proceed to deal with the assertion respecting the success of transportation. We freely admit that transportation, as a secondary punishment, was not universally successful. We never yet heard it asserted that it was. We have never attempted to exclude it from the common lot of every human institution, which is, and always must be, more or less imperfect. But we would ask, where is the system of punishment that has ever proved so successful as transportation? What other mode of punishment has been so reformatory in its effects—has been productive of consequences so beneficial at once to the criminal and to the society whose laws he violated? Let the opponents of this system look to the mode of punishment which prevailed before it was introduced, and point out, if they can, a dozen individuals who have, after conviction, regained their station in society, re-established their reputation, or advanced their fortune. They cannot point out a single one. The criminal of former times, when once convicted, was irretrievably lost—from the gaol, or the hulks, or the penitentiary, there was no means of rising in the world—the convicted criminal had for ever forfeited his station amongst honest men, and with that he lost his self respect and his respect for the laws of his country. But how different was the lot of the criminal transported to these shores. Here, at all events, an opportunity was afforded him, not merely of re-establishing himself anew, but of advancing to a state of comfort and respectability, which he never could have hoped for in the country from which he had been driven. Here inducements were held out to him to pursue a line of life different from any that his former experience had made him acquainted with—here, there was a field for his labor with a prospect of large remuneration—here he was at once convinced by all that he saw around him, that honesty was the best policy—and hence he became an altered man. The degraded criminal was transformed into a hard working member of a new society, and with bettered fortunes he assumed better habits, and better feelings, and in time rose far above the level from which he had fallen. In thousands of instances has this occurred in this colony, and the present and past prosperity of this community, has, in a great degree, resulted from it. That all the criminals who were transported hither improved in this way, we do not assert. It is possible that only a small minority of them became respectable members of society. But still the number of instances in which this

wonderful regeneration took place, is sufficiently numerous to give the lie to the statement, that transportation “was too generally unsuccessful.” Had but a tithed of those who have attained to a decent standing in the community become reformed and respectable characters, we should have had ample cause to look upon transportation, as one of the most humane and one of the wisest plans, which human ingenuity ever devised for the benefit of mankind. That the system was full of errors and was badly carried out is indisputable, but this only establishes the fact that the undoubted benefits which it produced might under better management have been greatly augmented—and many a man who ended his life ignominiously upon the scaffold might, under different treatment, have become domesticated, happy, and opulent, like hundreds of others probably of no better disposition or opportunities than his own. Those who know anything of the past history of this colony are well aware that nearly all the crime which formerly prevailed amongst the convict population, was produced by the ignorance, the cupidity, or the brutality of the assignees of convict labor. In hundreds of instances unfortunate men were goaded on to the commission of crime, by the violence and oppression of their masters, who treating them as wild beasts, were afterwards astonished at the savage and reckless passions which they themselves were the means of calling into activity. A better state of society now exists here, and public opinion possesses a force which formerly was unknown to it, and consequently much of the oppression, and much of the crime of past days, would never again make its appearance with the revival of transportation. Precautions too, could easily be taken against the obvious evils of the old system, and with the accumulated experience of fifty years, a system of convict administration might be constructed, such as would increase a hundredfold, the benefits which have already resulted from transportation. But considerations such as these seem not to influence these pious memorialists. They think it sufficient for them to assure her Majesty that transportation was “too generally unsuccessful,” and care not to enquire whether any other system was as beneficial, or whether that system itself might not be rendered more advantageous than ever it was before. The mention made by these gentlemen about “political evils” and “constitutional principles” might have been spared, seeing how little confidence the community can have in their exposition of either. The slaves and parasites of the Bishop of Australia—the followers of Newman and Pusey—the opponents of general education—the friends of ignorance and superstition, and the advocates of clerical domination—can know little of constitutional principles, or can be little qualified to judge rightly of political evils. Following the praiseworthy example of the *Herald*, they assure her Majesty that it is, they conceive, too plain to admit of question that the preponderance of public opinion is against the renewal of transportation. How they have ascertained this fact they do not inform us, and, in all probability, they rely upon the statements of that honest and accurate newspaper, the *Herald*—a newspaper which has not hesitated to characterize every paltry meeting of half-a-dozen shoemakers and tinkers in the interior, as a great public demonstration—and to assert that, because about two hundred persons, for whose opinions no one can have the slightest respect, out of a population of two hundred thousand souls, have denounced the revival of transportation, therefore the colonists are opposed to it almost to a man. Whether the colonists are opposed to it, will be seen by the petitions now in course of signature, and not by the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In the mean time, it can excite little displeasure, and less disappointment, to see the Bishop and his clergy joining the *Herald* in the disingenuous and dishonest attempts which it is daily making to resist a wise measure, involving in its determination the dearest interests of this most important colony. As they are both sharing in the trickery and falsehood of these attempts, we have no doubt they will be equal sharers in the ignominy and disgrace.

## THE AUSTRALIAN DRACO.

It was to reproach to our holy religion that the preaching of the gospel made no salutary impression upon criminals herded in gangs. . . . For he might, without irreverence assert, that its Divine author never contemplated its being preached to men in that state. . . . Neither could any reasonable man believe that criminals far removed from the influences of religion would indulge, like devout hermits of old, to whom peculiar grace had been imparted, in constant, devout contemplation.—MR. C. CAMPBELL.

CAPTAIN FAUNCE.—What is to be done with offenders?—they must live somewhere: you cannot sweep them from the face of the earth.

MR. C. CAMPBELL.—YOU CAN HANG THEM.

*Sydney Herald, 19th February, 1847.*

Print, pressmen, print!—Saints put your throats in order,  
For the new creed of Charley o'er the Border;  
See spurious piety, yoked with purer pride,  
And simpering affectation, side by side.

Oh! wert thou, Charley, but an M.L.C.,  
With how great unction thus rebuked might be  
That charity whose want makes up the Pharisee.

No more the lowly criminal exhort,  
But hup your benisons in the pampered court;  
Amid soft scenes of listless luxury  
Pour forth your sure prescriptions of ennui.

But spurn the wretched—reverently I speak—  
The Saviour scorned to smooth sin's rugged cheek;  
Not from the paltry transcript of the word,  
Those musty truths which every one has heard,  
My text I take but from the spirit benign  
Which sheds on Pusey's brow its beams divine.

Spirit of mystery! shunning reason's rules,  
As dim to wisdom, as revered by fools;  
Such as imparted once peculiar grace  
To holy saints, who flying from the race  
Of grosser man, told still their prayers devout.  
Where none their saintly errors might point out.  
With them I scorn the rabble, and with them  
My sin-abhorring fervour will proclaim;  
And, to each sore belaboured classic's wonder,  
Through patchwork of his timeworn language blunder.

What! I, selected layman! spout my prayers  
Mid the unwashed, in tongue as tame as theirs?  
Forbidden heaven! let Africa's torrid clime  
March the hot blood which plunged them into crime;  
Their shivering limbs let Iceland's winters pinch,  
Ere from the stool of pride I'll budge an inch.

If with my charity, but with pleaded right,  
Those countries shun them, hang them out of sight;  
Then when the red blood gurgles in their throats,  
The mimic juice shall bubble from my bottle,  
And, while the ruby stimulant I drink,  
With meek content on saving grace I'll think.  
Saints only need the passage of the gullet—  
To convicts give the gallows, or a bullet.

So spoke the sage—applauding murmurs ran,  
With each shrill cadence, from freed man to man;  
And when the good man treated them to Latin,  
They swore no less than spirit had put that in.  
Who but the inspired such portents might eject?  
Who but rapt hierophants of the Lay select?

Benignant spirit! whatsoever thou art,  
Which from compunction freest thy votary's heart,  
If e'er my sense to blunt kind heaven should choose,  
And justice, charity, religion, lose  
Their hallowed forms, do thou thy charms infuse.  
Grant me that conscience which, when bidding murder,  
Can yet find scripture warrant for the order;  
Dooms sheep to pot and mankind to the gallows—  
These for their crimes, the other for their talloes;  
Denies that Word to wean lost man of error,  
Which on the cross redeemed the thief from terror;  
Grant me the self-content to make me stammer  
Chaotic fragments of the Eton grammar,  
And classical in my divinity  
As monkish in my dog-latinity,  
Appal the rustics with my bookish learning,  
The learned with the rough zeal in me burning;  
Grant this, and though round me may be borne  
The shaft of ridicule, the breath of scorn,  
Though Reason's banner 'gainst me be unfurled,  
My innate dulness shall defy the world.

RUSTICUS.

## REVIVAL OF TRANSPORTATION.

WE publish below a petition which is now in course of signature by the residents in the district of Berrima. Having in another part of this day's ATLAS, devoted a considerable portion of our space to the subject of transportation, we can do no more at present, than recommend the petition to the careful perusal of our readers, as a document, which, in a small compass, contains more sound sense than all that has been said and written on the other side put together.

The Petition of the undersigned Landholders and other Residents in the district of Berrima.

Most respectfully sheweth.

That your Petitioners deeply impressed with the most painful feelings of regret, for the sufferings of large masses of their fellow British subjects throughout the United Kingdom of their parent country, and moreover, penetrated with a conviction that as christians, fellow subjects, and fellow men, it is their paramount duty to assist, to the utmost of their power, in the alleviation of those distresses, beg most respectfully to submit that, after the most mature consideration of the whole subject, they are of opinion that the suggestions of the late Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the colonies, Mr. Gladstone, and the plans founded upon them, in the late elaborate and excellent report of your Honorable Council, for the revival of transportation, accompanied with immigration, at the entire expense of the parent country, offers the best, and perhaps only remedy that is available for the above evils.

That your Petitioners are induced to come to this opinion, from a very careful consideration of the whole subject, whence they have arrived at conclusions, amply borne out hitherto by long and extensive experience, and careful reflection.

1stly. Because the importation of convicts into this colony, even under the late system, which would very probably admit of some slight improvements, as suggested in the report, was the most economical, most humane, and in every respect most

reformatory punishment that ever was adopted, or perhaps devised, not excepting the best conducted penitentiary establishments in the United States of America.

2ndly. Because after the most careful consideration of all that has been written and said to the contrary, they are convinced that the revival of transportation would not tend to contaminate any classes of their fellow colonists, even some of the late most strenuous objectors to transportation who have written on the subject, and have for the most part abandoned their former objections, and who, during the period of their strongest opposition to its continuance, admitted that, up to the period when they write, the native and immigrant portion of our population were not inferior in morality to any, the most moral community in the civilized world—an observation to the correctness of which your Petitioners can bear full testimony.

3rdly. Because your Petitioners, and they believe not merely the more enlightened portion of the colonists, but also the British Government, are becoming gradually more and more convinced, not only on theoretical grounds, but from its numerous practical failures, that the Wakefield system of colonization is unsuited to its object, and that any future attempts to carry it out would be attended, not merely with disappointment, but, as in the late instance with ourselves, with the most lamentable universal distress and confusion—from the effects of which, to a large amount, even mercantile firms in the parent country were not exempt.

4thly. Because we are convinced that the revival of transportation accompanied with immigration, at the expense of the parent country, under the same or analagous conditions as those which have been projected in the report above alluded to, will tend to the gradual resuscitation of this colony, be the means of furnishing it with labour adequate to its extensive and annually increasing demands for it, of developing its immense resources, and of creating to the parent country a large and perpetually increasing market for her manufactures, in which respect the measure contemplated must tend to produce accumulative benefits to Great Britain, as to the amount of which, from their obvious magnitude, we forbear from stating our opinion.

Under all the above circumstances, your Petitioners beg to approach your Honorable House, and express their hope that no exertion will be wanting in obtaining for the advancement of the best interests of religion, and of good morality, and the almost only means of adequately alleviating the large and annually increasing extent of suffering of their fellow subjects at home, and for the furtherance of sound principles of some of the most important objects of political economy, the effectuation of the momentous suggestions contained in the excellent despatch of Mr. Gladstone, and of the statesman-like plans which have been so admirably developed in the report of your Committee, to which we have before referred—and, as in duty bound, we will ever pray.

## Port Phillip.

## CANT AND CONVICTISM.

No person within the range of the Australian Colonies can be more anxious for the renewal of Free Emigration than ourselves—and we shall always be ready and willing to advocate any measure likely to lead to such a consummation, most devoutly to be wished, but we are getting sick of the cant that is daily being retailed in the little chandlers' shops of the town on the subject of labor;—how can convicts be such dangerous characters, when we find many of them so far reformed as to lead the cry of no convicts; or is the cry mere cant without any meaning whatever. We are plain spoken enough, we hate hypocrisy, either in politics or religion; but we will go with the haters of convict pollution as far as common sense will warrant and no farther. The axiom of the French philosopher—*Chaque nation doit se gouverner selon le besoin de ses affaires et la conversation du bien public*, is just, and we hold by it. The "unco guide," as Robbie Burns terms the narrow-minded ignorant pedants, who pretend to be better than the world with whom they associate, say, we want emigration,—we admit it. They say we should not take convicts; but let them show how we are to avoid doing this. Citizens, great as you may seem in your own eyes can you prevent this market from being supplied from Van Diemen's Land by the very worst class of convicts? Can you shut your ports against them, and keep them out with their pollution. All your great efforts must end in unmeaning talk, and do infinitely more harm than good. Think you, great gaping simpletons, that the settlers would bring over laborers from Van Diemen's Land if they could get free laborers? Is it likely for their own sake, or that of their families, or of their property that they would receive them at all, if they could get better? No: they would not. They only select out of two evils; they must have men or they must be ruined and starved. We are anxious for free emigration. Let any one show us that there is any chance of obtaining it and we will support it. We do not use much unmeaning bunkum on the subject, but we are most anxious for it: is there, however, a land fund, and if not how are we to obtain free laborers? Perhaps the "no pollution gentry" will subscribe enough to bring out a ship load of free emigrants for us. Let them do so, and it will be more valuable to the colony than all the cant they will retail for the next half score years. A trifle of £10 each would do it: they certainly will not grudge that; if they do, we will put them down as quacks unworthy of the notice of sensible men.—P. P. Gazette.

There are at the present time in Geelong no less than forty-three different buildings in the course of erection, of which is comprised an English Church, a Catholic Chapel, an extensive Brewery, an Hotel, two Public-houses, and several houses and shops; for elegance, neatness, and stability of architecture many of them equal, if they do not surpass, buildings of the same description in Melbourne. We doubt whether any Hotel in the sister colony, Van Diemen's Land, will be found to compare with the one facing the Bay, building by Mr. Atkins.

THE HARVEST.—The harvest is now nearly brought to a close throughout the country; on the Barrabool Hills and the surrounding districts, the wheat is all cut and stacked; the yield has been most prolific, more so than has been known for some seasons past; in many places as much as forty bushels to the acre have been obtained, and in very few has it averaged less than from thirty-two to thirty-five bushels; both oats and barley have alike yielded abundantly. Many of the farmers and settlers have despatched orders to Van Diemen's Land for thrashing machines, as independent of the very high rate of wages they are compelled to pay men, they find it impossible to have it thrashed out fast enough by hand.

We regret to state that much illness is prevailing through the town at the present time. Ophthalmic affections are very general, and so severe, that in some cases loss of sight for several days has been the consequence to those affected.

WOOL SEASON.—All this season's wool may be said to have arrived down the country, only a little of the late shorn lambs'

remains to come. The stores in town are now comparatively empty. Something like eighteen hundred bales of wool have been shipped from this port more than last season; it will become our duty shortly to lay before our readers the full particulars of this year's clip, showing the increase since the last.

Fifteen thousand bushels of wheat are in the course of shipment from Launceston to the port of London.—*Geelong Advertiser*.

## Van Diemen's Land.

## THE LABOR QUESTION.

It will be seen by the following review of the Labor Question in the sister colony, that serious apprehensions are entertained for the result of a discontinuance of transportation to that colony, and that the high rate of wages which must naturally follow such a measure, and the great expense of introducing free labor into the colony, is looked upon as a total annihilation to all agricultural and pastoral pursuits.

There are at present, we believe, nearly 20,000 male and female ticket-of-leave holders and passholders in the service of the settlers of this colony, employed in agriculture, in mechanical pursuits, and as domestic servants. On the supposition that the average rate of wages is £10 per annum, the amount of wages paid for their services will be £200,000. In New South Wales, Port Phillip, and South Australia, the rate of wages is much higher; the minimum is about £25, but £30 and £35 is not an unusual amount. It is now generally understood that transportation to this colony has (upon the representation of a small body of petitioners, and at their earnest request) been put a stop to. What will be the result? Wages will naturally reach the level of the neighbouring colonies; laborers will not remain in Van Diemen's Land when they can find better wages so close at hand. Instead of £10 a-year, the settlers, be they agriculturists, wool-growers, or tradesmen, will have double or treble that amount to pay, and the £200,000 paid at present, will amount to between £400,000 and £500,000, leaving them out of pocket to the amount of the difference. The first result therefore of the "glorious news," the success of "the petition," will be a loss to the settlers of some £250,000 per annum of money to be paid out of their pockets. That is, if they can carry on their operations at all under the circumstances, if they can exist. This is a direct loss, but there will be many others. The troops will be withdrawn—Government expenditure will cease—departments will be reduced, or done away with altogether. The loss to the settler by these reductions will probably be some additional £100,000 per annum. Thus the success of the "great petition," as it was vauntingly, but most incorrectly called, will entail a direct and contingent loss upon the colony of some £350,000 a-year.

With all this, town property must fall extensively in value, as with all articles of manufacture, and articles of luxury will be unsaleable. There will be a complete social revolution. It will soon be a question of existence. Such will be some of the results of the agitation of our great political demagogues, and of our self-styled patriots. They will have brought about "the crisis." It will be no comfort to the colonists, that with their downfall, that of the petitioners is also certain.

From the existence of the mass of laborers, ticket-of-leave holders, and pass-holders at present employed by the community, and from the extensive establishments, with their numerous staffs, consequent on their presence in Van Diemen's Land, the saving to the employers in the direct shape of wages, and the contingent pecuniary advantages, as we have shewn, may be taken in the rough at between £300,000 and £400,000. But we ought to bear in mind that a further item in the amount of pecuniary advantage is, that the whole expense of the introduction of this amount of labor, has been paid, not by the colonists, but by Great Britain. Reckoning all expenses, agents in England and in the colony, and cost of maintenance for a period after arrival, labor could not be introduced at a rate much less, if less at all, than £30 for each individual laborer. This for 20,000, the number of ticket-of-leave and pass-holders employed by the community, would amount to £600,000, a sum which Van Diemen's Land never yet has been able to expend on the introduction of labor. And supposing this amount could have been raised by way of loan, which from the want of adequate security, is more than doubtful, the interest on such a loan, at the low rate of 5 per cent., would have been £30,000, a perpetual annual outlay entailed upon the colony. And then would a better class of laborers have been introduced? We think not. Even on the best organized scheme of emigration, the best men and the best workmen do not emigrate. The laborers picked up by emigration agents are such as hang loose upon society, the idle, the dissipated, and the careless; the steady, skilled, and active workman does not need, and will not leave his native country, and break up and in upon all his old associations and domestic arrangements, merely to proceed in a new country, to labor as he does in his own. The prudence which makes him a good and useful member of English society, induces him to weigh well all the consequences of a change of country, and he determines that the advantage of merely changing his place of labor, is not sufficient to lead him to make the change. After the great necessary outlay in the introduction of free labor, the class of laborers would in the general run be much as we have at present, with this disadvantage, that they would not be so much under the control of the law.

One favourite argument against the present, is to denounce it as unjust to the colony, and the expense of police and gaols is referred to as illustrative of this injustice. But it must be shewn that a less expense would be entailed by the employment of free labor of the description which would be introduced under any plan of emigration, before this argument can be considered of any weight. This will not be maintained, and the argument must go for nothing. But even suppose it were otherwise, the interest of the sum necessary to introduce free labor, would more than meet the difference of police expense under the present, and any other supposable system. It must also be recollected, that of this £200,000 earned at present as wages, a great portion goes directly to the colonial Treasury chest, in the shape of duties upon articles of consumption, and the whole circulates freely among tradesmen and others.

These are reasons, we think, sufficient to induce the community to pause, and deliberately enquire, if in following the shadow, the delusive *ignus fatuus* which, as we think, has already misled them from a consideration of their own interests, they are acting either with calmness of judgment, or with the prudence which in the ordinary transactions of life, they would regret to be deficient in, and would suffer accordingly. The day is approaching when, unless the Government is more wisely directed than to go in with the views of the agitation of the last year or two, the injurious consequences of blindly following after the clamour of a few prejudiced leaders, honest we may admit, but still under the influence of the prejudices of their theories, will be extensively and deeply felt. But then the mischief will be without remedy. The public will become wise by experience, but it will be too late.—*Colonial Times*.