The Atlas

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THE ATLAS OF THIS DAY CONTAINS:—

THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

The last Session of the Legislative Council has opened under the most favorable auspices. The speech, which Sir Charles Fitz Roy delivered on this occasion, is the most gratifying document of a similar character which we have yet been called upon to record. It evinces an earnest desire to consult the wishes, and promote the interests, of this community, and satisfies us, that we have now a government, both local and imperial, from which much is to be expected. The leading lines of road are to be brought immediately under the notice of the Legislative Council, and the Governor has announced his intention to cordially co-operate with that body, in placing them, at once, in an efficient state of repair. This promise Sir Charles Fitz Roy has made, without any reference to the District Councils: so that we may hope now to see this most important work accomplished without delay. Steps also have been taken with a view to the speedy revival of immigration—the necessity of which has, for the last few months, been so severely felt throughout the colony. But the most important part of the speech consists in the following paragraph:—"I have much satisfaction in announcing to the Council the determination of Her Majesty's Government to surrender to the Legislature of the colony the right of appropriating the casual revenue of the Crown, collected therein, in the despatch from Earl Grey, which communicates to me this important concession, and of which I will cause a copy to be immediately laid before you. His Lordship observes that 'the sum set apart for a civil list, is as large a part of the revenue of the colony (other than the land revenue) as Parliament designed to withdraw, or as it is desirable to withdraw, from the control of the local Legislature.' On the part of Her Majesty's Government, his Lordship entirely disclaims any wish to augment that deduction." When we consider the pertinacity with which Sir George Gipps resisted all interference by the Legislature with this casual revenue—when we consider how, time after time, he refused his assent to laws which placed the penalties, fines, and forfeitures at the disposal of the people's representatives—and when we recollect that the very first document laid by Sir Charles Fitz Roy before the Council was a copy of his instructions from the Secretary of State, in which he was distinctly directed to take care that in all Acts to be passed by him and the Legislative Council, levying money or imposing fines, forfeitures, and penalties, express mention should be made, that the same were granted to the Queen for the public uses of the territory—we can form some estimate of the spirit of fairness and conciliation in which this concession is made. The casual revenue is, in itself, a matter of little moment; but the principle which such a concession recognises, is a matter of considerable importance. The five or six thousand pounds which this revenue annually amounts to, could not very materially augment the power of the executive, but small as it was, Sir George Gipps and Lord Stanley were firmly resolved to retain its disposal in their own hands. The giving up, therefore, of this sum, we cannot but look upon with considerable satisfaction, inasmuch as it evinces a degree of liberality on the part of the present Secretary of State, which we hail with confidence as the harbinger of brighter days than this colony has yet seen. The language in which Earl Grey has communicated the intentions of the government upon this matter, fully bears out the high estimate, which from the first we formed of this nobleman's fitness for the office which he now fills, with no less honor to himself than benefit to the empire at large. There is one omission in the opening speech of Sir Charles Fitz Roy, which we exceedingly regret. That omission consists in the absence of any allusion to the matter of education. Once already has this most important subject been pressed by the Council upon his Excellency's attention, and he declined to take any steps in it, in consequence of his then unavoidable want of the necessary knowledge and experience. That excuse can no longer avail him, for he has now been among us long enough to make himself acquainted with all the details necessary to enable him to come to some decision upon this matter. Why he has not done so, we cannot conjecture. But we cannot believe that, if the Council should again move in this business, he will shrink any longer from the task which will thus be imposed upon him. We therefore hope that Mr. Lowe will redeem the pledge which he gave last Session, and at once bring forward the subject of education, with a breadth and completeness worthy of its importance.

MORE MEDIÆVAL NONSENSE.

The Bishop and his "Churchmen" have made the extraordinary discovery, that the Almighty Architect of the Universe expects his creatures to erect for him structures of greater grandeur and beauty, than those which they build for their own habitations. "Would the deeper feelings of their hearts," says his Lordship, "allow them themselves to dwell in houses of splendour and grandeur, whilst they cared not for the structure of the mansion of their Lord. No matter in what dwellings they lived—the best, the grandest they could erect, should be devoted to God." "They must feel a sentiment of reproach," says Mr. Allwood, "that they should be living in their own comfortable homes, while the house of their God was lying waste." "The principle," says Mr. Sconce, "was this—that people were bound to give of their best to God, The church ought to be the richest, and handsomest, and largest building of all, whatever the others might be. If people lived in hovels, they might be content with a barn for their church. A plain brick church was in its place among lowly cottages of the same material, but the churches of Sydney were out of place; they ought to be far larger than they were, and adorned with all the magnificence that art could give them. People ought to be ashamed, as David was, to live in houses built of better material, on a grander proportionate scale, and more richly furnished than the house of God," "They would not, they could not," says Mr. Darvall, "if they really honored God, fail in erecting to him churches fitting, in all respects, to the style and manner in which they erected their own homes. "The Cathedral," says Mr. Lowe, "would be as a parish church. To every settler, from every quarter, it would open wide its gates. Its ample space would suffice for every visitor to the growing city. There, too, would every poor man claim of right his place, his presence unmarked by any distinctive barrier, save that only which Christian deference imposes. How many worldly, if not degenerate hearts, which might enter it from the wilderness around, might not be sent away recalled to a love of grandeur and beauty, and the order and decency the church prescribed, strengthened in respect to God, and in ideas of his sublimity and mightines." Such was the language—such the arguments—used by these devout admirers of by-gone superstitions to incite their brother "churchmen" to contribute towards the erection of their Cathedral. The temple of God, they tell us, should be a costlier building than the dwelling-places of man. Churchmen ought not to live in finer houses than the habitations of the Lord. If people dwell in hovels, a barn will suffice for the house of prayer; if in palaces, a cathedral only is a fitting-place to bow down in all humility before the Giver of every good. We trust that we are not insensible to the propriety of conducting public worship, with decency and order—that we have a just admiration for the beauties of architecture, and the rich and lofty structures, which the taste and piety of former generations have raised to the honor and glory of God—that we can appreciate the effect which is produced by "the long drawn aisle and fretted vault"—that we can understand the softening influence of "the swelling anthem, and the note of praise"—that we are not altogether dead to the charms of the "dim religious light," which "streams in mellow radiance" through Oriel windows, decorated by the hand of art with a costly and profuse magnificence. We do not—we cannot despise these aids towards the promotion of religious fervour. But we do despise, and that, too, with an intensity, which we find it difficult to express, that miserable superstition, which leads people, professing to hold by the pure and spiritual doctrines of Christianity, to draw an unseemly, and profane comparison between the house of God and the habitations of men, as though the Great Being, whose temple is the universe, were in any way affected by the superiority of human dwelling places, over the equally frail structures, erected by human beings, to celebrate His greatness and His glory. We do not wish to trespass upon the province of the Clergy, how greatly soever we may be displeased with the manner in which the duties are performed, but we cannot help reminding the Lord Bishop of Australia, and his "Churchmen," that the Great Founder of our religion said, that "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them"—that the Holy Spirit will be present among those who have met to worship with "mingled praise and prayer," whether they kneel upon the bare ground within the humble precincts of a barn, or upon downy cushions under the lofty dome of the proudest structure raised by human hands—whether within a modest edifice of brick, or beneath the glorious cupola of St. Peter's or St. Paul's—whether within a plain dissenting meeting house, or under the venerable arches of York Minster or Westminster Abbey. The spirit of God is everywhere—there is no spot of earth which can boast the privilege of His exclusive presence. The stern heroes of the covenant on the hill side and by the mountain torrent with the grass and the rocks for their standing place, and the sky for their canopy, worshipped their creator—and the fervour and the sincerity of their devotions (unless history deceives us), can well bear a comparison with that exhibited in the proudest of those gothic edifices, which have so long remained as memorials of the taste of former generations, and of the vast influence of that confederation of priests under whose care and guidance they were erected. The Puritans, like the Apostles, needed no human temple to incite them to religious zeal—in the great temple of nature they performed their religious rites—and preserved their piety amidst every temptation, without the assistance of either builder or musician. How much of the spirit which animated these enthusiastic followers of Christ exists among the mitred prelates of the present day, we cannot say, but we cannot help thinking that the proudest among their number, might learn something from the practices of those who could worship their God without even the magnificence of a cathedral to inspire them—and the clergymen of the Church of England would, in our opinion, be better employed in teaching their flocks to love virtue and morality, than in urging them to decorate their churches—in holding forth for their admiration the ennobling picture of devotion, unaccompanied by pomp—than in eulogizing the semblance of devotion, set off by every artifice, and embellished by every ornament which human ingenuity can devise, or human hands can accomplish. Cathedrals have their influence and their use, but they are not of such mighty consequence as these "churchmen" would have us to believe—they are not needed to "recall us to a love of grandeur and beauty," or to strengthen us in ideas of God's "sublimity and mightiness." Mr. Charles Lowe, and those who think with him, may be of a different opinion, but we must be permitted to express our conviction, that the

great works of nature, in the wilderness—the lofty crag—the verdant solitude—the flowing river—the bright sky—the glorious luminary that gives life, and animation, and beauty, to them all, are most capable of inspiring noble ideas, and enabling the creature to form a just conception of that Creator, who "arrogates to himself all that is great, subordinates to himself all that is fair, and sits enthroned upon the riches of the universe." This must be the opinion of every person of healthful mind; and it does not surprise us, that those who admire the puny works of man more than the grander ones of nature, should overlook the task of instructing the immortal intellect of their fellow-men, for the far less dignified and useful one of erecting aisles and cloisters, which to day exist, and to-morrow are not. A land, which can boast of its cathedrals, while its population are sunk in ignorance, is the most melancholy of all spectacles—and that spectacle Bishop Broughton is now striving to exhibit amongst us in all its loathsome deformity. Will the members of the Church of England aid him in this unworthy task?—will they, with lavish hand, place their treasures, at his disposal, in order that he may give us Gothic architecture, while he obstinately refuses to assist in raising the people from a worse than Gothic ignorance?

THE AUSTRALIAN GAS-LIGHT COMPANY.

In a short summary, about a week ago, we commented upon this same subject, and adverted to the exorbitant, the ruinous, prices at which the citizens are mulcted by this monopolizing Company for the article of Gas. Since then we have acquired additional information as to the rates, &c., charged for Gas in the mother country. This information we gladly lay before the public, in hopes that they will be roused to do away with the monopoly, which the Sydney Gas Company, so injuriously to us all, at present enjoys. In using the word monopoly, lest it should be thought that we do so without sufficient reason, we have only to state, in limine, that "Gas by measure in Sydney at 22s. 6d. per thousand cubic feet," costs in Manchester no more than "6s. per thousand." We will now proceed to select from tabular documents before us, and give a brief synopsis of the different rates charged for Gas, according to quantity, in three of the most flourishing towns in the United Kingdom—Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow; and we particularly direct attention to the fact, that as the price *decreased* to the consumer, the *increase* consumed was enormous. In Liverpool there are two Gas Companies, they charge an uniform rate of 4s 6d. per thousand feet, and take off no discount. The following is a statement of the price of the Gas and receipts each year since 1839, up to December 1845, shewing, as we have just observed, that as the price was reduced, the rental increased in far greater proportion.

	Rental received.
1839—10s. per 1000 feet	£24,265
1840—10s. six months } 8s " }	26,438
1841— 8s. "	27,133
1842— 7s. "	28,979
1843— 7s. "	30,591
1844— 6s. half year	17,069
1845— 6s. " } 5s. " }	33,021

In Manchester the charge for Gas per metre is—

When the annual consumption is under 200,000 cubic feet, 6s. per 1000; when it amounts to 200,000 and is under 400,000, 5s. 9d.
amounts to 400,000 and is under 600,000, 5s. 6d.; when it amounts to 600,000 and is under 800,000, 5s. 3d.
amounts to 800,000 and upwards, 5s. per thousand.

In this town we find by a Manchester paper, giving an account of the Manchester Gas Company for a series of years, that as the prices were reduced, the extra consumption of Gas was so great, that auxiliary works were obliged to be built in order to supply the demand. Subjoined is the gradual decrease to consumers below 200,000 per annum per 1000 feet for five years.

1841	1842	1843	1844	1845
7s.	7s.	6s. 6d.	6s.	6s.

In Glasgow, the Directors of the Gas-Light Company contract to supply gas by meter for 6s. 8d. per thousand feet, subject to the following discounts:

When the quantity amounts to 16,000 and is under 25,000 feet, 5 per cent. discount.
25,000 and is under 35,000 feet, 10 per cent. discount.
35,000 and is under 45,000 feet, 12½ per cent. discount.
45,000 and is under 55,000 feet, 15 per cent. discount.
55,000 and is under 65,000 feet, 17½ per cent. discount.
65,000 and is under 100,000 feet, 20 per cent. discount.
100,000 and is under 150,000 feet, 22½ per cent. discount.
On all quantities above 150,000 feet, 25 per cent. discount.

We have also compared the rules and regulations to be observed by the consumers of Gas of these different Companies, with the conditions (pretty stringent ones) of the Australian Gas-Light Company; but a comparison of these may occupy our attention at a future time, as we expect to receive further information on the subject.

NEW MODE OF BUILDING A CATHEDRAL!

We have not as yet been able to give any account of the late meeting, on the subject of St. Andrew's Cathredal. Mr. Charles Lowe has, therefore, kindly furnished us with the following summary of the speeches delivered on that constructive occasion.

Would Sydney only see th' Association
Jog on in mediæval aspiration,
Of pelf she'd spurn each base consideration
And let our Bishop blast his old foundation.

COUNCIL PAPERS.

The following extract from a Despatch, No. 11, of Earl Grey, under date of 6th August, 1846, and presented to the Legislative Council on Wednesday last, will be read with much satisfaction:

Sir George Gipps has pointed out in the Acts numbered 8 (respecting the delivery of coal in Sydney), and 10 (respecting diseased sheep), and 15 (for the regulation of the Customs), a deviation from the usual and constitutional method of imposing fines and pecuniary penalties. They are in all those Acts made payable not to the Queen, but to the Treasurer of New South Wales, the produce being expressly declared to be subject to be appropriated by future Acts of the Local Legislature. The evident, indeed the avowed design, of this innovation is to obviate a claim which, under the Constitutional Act of the Colony, it is supposed the Crown might otherwise make to the proceeds of all such fines, penalties, and forfeitures if granted as usual to her Majesty; that Act having placed at the disposal of the Legislative Council the produce of all taxes, rates, duties, and imposts only; and those words (it is maintained) do not extend to a fine, to a penalty, or to a forfeiture.

I will not pause to discuss this question of law, assuming that the result of that omission is to leave that source of revenue at the disposal of the Crown, I can have no difficulty in stating that it is a right on which the Queen will not be advised to insist; but which her Majesty promptly and unreservedly surrenders to the Legislative Council. The sum set apart for a civil list is as large a part of the revenue of the colony (other than the land revenue) as Parliament designed to withdraw, or as it is really desirable to withdraw from the control of the local legislature. On the part of her Majesty's Government I entirely disclaim any wish to augment that deduction. Consequently to any acts which may be passed imposing fines, penalties, and forfeitures, and placing the produce of them at the disposal of the Legislative Council, no objections must be made on the grounds of that provision, unless indeed the provision should be so framed as to take away or interfere with the Royal prerogative of pardon.

THE SQUATTING SYSTEM.

There is an old saying—

The only value of a thing
Is just as much as it will bring.

And in making a few remarks on the land and "squattages" (as a correspondent in our last publication terms the runs) we must set out with the principle clearly defined, that unproductive land cannot possibly have any value or be worth any money. If a squatter who grazes 4000 sheep, were to purchase 10,000 acres on which to keep them at the present upset price of £1 an acre, he would not get one-fourth per cent. for the money invested in the speculation. Reduce it even to 5s. or 2s. 6d. an acre and it will be a bad speculation, and barely return 2 per cent. even if the time of the squatter were added to his capital. If this colony had waited until it progressed gradually by the *sale* of land, it would not be now of much consequence, and indeed be still a poor and insignificant spot. The squatting system has developed its resources more rapidly than has ever been known previously; and no system founded on the principle of purchasing land could have been productive of the same result. Our correspondent has referred to the Bishop's letter. We extract from it—

"Experience had demonstrated the impracticability of a grazing system, founded on the principle of requiring the purchase of the fee-simple of all land required for the support of stock; it is necessarily ruinous to the purchaser. The application of the same test manifestly showed the ill effects, moral and social attached to the practice of occupying immense tracts of country for pastoral purposes, while no right of property in any proportion of that extent of soil was vested in the occupiers."

That such a system must have been attended with some evils all will admit; for no principle, however excellent, can be divested of many drawbacks, but we at once ask how could the resources of this fine colony be developed without the squatting systems. Let those opposed to it reply to our question, and then we may argue those minor points which they have been so fond of bringing forward at at all times. Our conclusion is supported by Sir Thomas Mitchell, who, in his evidence before the Legislative Council, having mentioned 2s. 6d. to 5s. an acre as a moderate price of land, immediately adds, that "it is not a proper price at which a sheep farmer would purchase the whole of the land occupied by his sheep." The minimum suggested by this witness, although of a very peculiar character, is apparently the only one which could have ensured a continuance of purchases. "I see," he observes, "no difficulty in determining an upset price. All that is necessary is to take care that it be made so low that no fall in the price of wool and stock could affect its value as a safe investment for the production of these articles"

We trust in these introductory remarks we have proved the necessity for the existence of some such system as that known in our colony as the "squatting system," and we shall glance briefly at the grievances complained of by a correspondent in our last publication, who signs his name "Dermid," and who appears to be an "anti-squatter," and perhaps one of those gentlemen who have some twenty acres of land which was bought in the dear times at £5 an acre, and which is not productive enough to supply his necessities, while the happy position of some settler, who invested the same amount in sheep, and who from the plain fact of having a family, and no wages to pay, has amassed an independence, has aroused the ire of our correspondent and caused him to attack the "squattages" upon the old principle of the "fox and the grapes." We have no personal acquaintance with our correspondent, and we may be mistaken in his character, but we shall examine his objections to the new regulations.

To answer a rambling letter such as "Dermid's" would be rather a difficult task, if we were to confine ourselves to the strict rules of propriety and logic—but for convenience sake we may be permitted to extract the marrow of the arguments used by our correspondent against the squatting system. The squatters are accused of grasping all the extent of runs that they possibly can; of monopolising the country; and one particular squatter is accused of holding four millions of acres, which would bring at 8s. an acre, £1,000,000, and sufficient to bring out 100,000 emigrants. The price of land could not with safety be reduced below 10s. an acre. If it were as low as 6s. companies from abroad would buy up the best land to the injury of the old colonists, who would find the fruits of their labor taken from them by strangers, who purchased their heritage at the eleventh hour. We have already said that it never would pay a grazier to purchase bad land at 5s. or even 2s. 6d an acre, for grazing stock, and it is clear that a system like the present is indispensable to give the colony a fair start; when civilisation and wealth spread across the length and breadth of the land every acre will be clutched by those who have capital to make it productive, and the whole land will be glutted with money, and those who think of mere sordid gain will wallow in it, and bask in the sunshine of general prosperity. We were one time of the same opinion as our correspondent, that the ruin of the colony could be averted by the reduction in the minimum price of land; that view we have expressed through the columns of this journal. We have since found good cause to form a rather different opinion. It would be hazardous to let it fall below 10s an acre, for if sold at a lower price every inch of it would be bought up to be retailed out again to the colonists in a few years at two or three pound an acre. There is no plan that can be adopted with a better prospect of success than a judicious arrangement of the squatting system,—giving the holder of a run fixity of tenure and every advantage, but compelling him to pay for any extra run he may hold. It is the fault of the Crown Land Commissioner if any squatter be allowed to hold any thing like the extent of run our correspondent has hinted at; and we regard this portion of his communication as a complete "Will o' the Wisp," with which he tries to frighten the uninitiated in country matters.

He next mentions the Bishops' letter, as an able exposure of the Squatting monopoly. This is a strange error. We have read every line of the letter in question, and it is just a long essay on Squatting, written to back up the views of Governor Gipps;—as for being an exposure of any thing but the writer's own weakness, it certainly was not. We have the most profound respect for the character of his Lordship, who has performed some noble actions, but at the same time we think he does not shine as a political teacher. We are certain therefore, that it becomes our duty to humbly suggest that he ought to confine his talents to the instruction of his flock, like a good shepherd; for he must be aware that the land is steeped in wickedness and misery, with hardly a hand stretched forward to save. His Lordship will we hope excuse the liberty we have taken, and see the propriety of following our advice. And in conclusion we can assure him that his letter has done infinite harm; because he has given his authority to a mass of crude and superficial theories, and all to please Governor Gipps.—*Port Phillip Gazette.*

THE CONDEMNED CRIMINALS.

To-morrow morning will see two unfortunate culprits take an eternal leave of this world, in expiation of the dreadful crime of which they have been convicted and sentenced.

That they have justly merited their ignoble end no person can for a moment gainsay; that their trial was conducted in a fair and impartial manner none will be found to deny; that every opportunity was afforded of enjoying the judicial privileges of British subjects, all equally agree; and that their doom is one of righteousness is alike indisputable. Therefore, as the matter stands at present, every one feels that so long as the criminal code remains unmodified, the condemned aborigines merit the extreme sentence of the law.

Spurious humanity-mongers, and those who cant and preach about "mental capacity"—who are perfectly reconciled to supply every aggressive blackfellow with a certificate to massacre, and actually pretend that the murder of a settler, as the spoliation of his property, is quite crimeless; such individuals will of course raise an endless category of objections to the consummation of the sentence, and would urge in lieu thereof the discharge of the culprits, each fitted out with a warm blanket and new tomahawk, to return to their native thickets, and dye the white man's bones in the white man's blood.

Such absurd "points of belief" we shall leave to slumber in the consciences of their cherishers. To such a sphere they will undoubtedly and properly be confined, but most certainly they meet no re-echo in the minds of the impartial.

We shall now advert to the chief object of our present notice. The murderers of Mr. Beveridge will, as we have said, be executed to-morrow morning in the gaol yard; they will make their sorrowful appearance on the last stage of human life, undergo the dreadful ordeal of the hangman, and thence career into the awful and unfathomable depths of eternity.

Let us, then, ask the question, Will the ends of justice be thus satisfied? Truly, and literally speaking, they will; but though the shedding of blood will be paid for by blood, still the more important, though perhaps more ultimate requirements of the principle of justice, will be altogether overlooked.

An act of retribution will of course be enacted; but justice is not by any means confined in her attributes to a solitary deed of vengeance. Revenge can be only recognised when considered in connexion with the more remote object of prevention; therefore the punishment inflicted by law pays far more regard to the future than the present.

The object of punishment is not so much the atonement, as *prevention*—an example, the action of which upon the human mind might deter from the commitment of future crime. And such being admitted, let us inquire whether the execution will, in the present instance, be attended with this posthumous effect? We are of a decidedly negative opinion, and for this reason, that its occurrence *in Melbourne*, and the almost total ignorance of its details and effect in the savage haunts of the Murray, will fail to act as an example to restrain others from perpetrating murders equally atrocious.