

THE SWAN RIVER NEWS,

AND

Western Australian Chronicle.

No. 1.

LONDON, JANUARY 1st, 1844.

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OUR PLANS AND INTENTIONS.

NEARLY fifteen years have revolved since an Act passed the Legislature for the Colonization of Western Australia, and although the scheme received considerable attention and favor for a time, like many other popular schemes, it has proved—not by any means a failure—but a project of very protracted success; and now, in the fourteenth year of its existence, the Colony of Western Australia is less known, less populated, less sought after, than those which have started into being ten years after its formation, and which now possess thrice the population, and enjoy thrice the public notice of their older neighbour. But why has the progress of Western Australia been thus retarded? not because it lacked any advantages natural or acquired, but because those advantages in which it stands unrivalled have never been publicly asserted. And why have South Australia and New Zealand, the junior Colonies of Australasia, progressed so rapidly, and in a manner thrown into the shade the Colony of the West?—not because they possess merits or recommendations superior, or even equal to her, but because their names have been emblazoned forth in newspapers, books, and magazines—because powerful companies at home, well knowing the necessity of notoriety, have contrived to keep their settlements constantly before the public eye. It is her obscurity, far more than any mismanagement in the outset, that has been the bane of Western Australia, and prevented her taking that position among the dependencies of Britain which has been usurped by more widely known, though less deserving colonies. And here we would draw the distinction between making a settlement better known, and puffing it. Far be it from us, the advocates of sober truth, to advise puffery of any description—the colony requires none; it can, thanks to the bounty of nature, flourish on its own resources. A simple detail of its qualifications as a field for emigration, if fairly and publicly stated, without exaggeration or detraction, is all that a really eligible colony requires for its recommendation—it is all that is required by Western Australia, and we feel convinced that if it were made as public as less scrupulously accurate descriptions of other colonies have been, it would occupy a higher

position than it does—a position higher than the best of them. In defending our colony from the aspersions which have been so unwarrantably but industriously flung upon its name, we shall indulge in no high-flown commendations of advantages to which it does not pretend—we shall not designate it a land of promise, or an *El dorado*—we shall be content with stating things as they are, and facts which have been proved by practical experience; and that is all that is necessary, and is the “plain unvarnished tale,” which has never been sufficiently made known. For although the *Australasian Record* and the *Emigration Gazette* have frequently stood forth as champions of the colony when she has been assailed by calumnies founded on prejudice, ignorance, or interest, it cannot be expected that the advocates of the colonies generally, can give so much attention to one of them in particular, as to refute the innumerable false and malicious statements which have been directed against it, without exciting the jealousy of the rest. It has therefore been proposed by a body of the colonists that a separate and distinct organ, exclusively protecting the interests of their colony, and furnishing to the English public a full and fair statement of her progress and prospects, would be advisable and, on their suggestions, and with their assistance, the projectors of the SWAN RIVER NEWS have been enabled to carry out their long-cherished plans, and to commence a publication in the capital of the British Empire, exclusively and undividedly advocating the cause of one of the finest colonies which that Empire possesses.

THE SWAN RIVER NEWS, AND WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CHRONICLE is the joint offspring of a party of gentlemen in Australia, and a few of its friends at home, emanating in the first instance from the present Editor; and it is proposed to continue it monthly, not only as a periodical reporter of the gradual progress and improvement of the colony, but also an accurate recorder adapted for future reference. Its contents will be strictly confined to subjects bearing exclusive relation to Western Australia, and within this designation it is projected to embrace the settlements of the Swan River—the Vasse, Murray, Williams, Toodyay, York, and Canning Districts, and Rottnest Island,—King

George's Sound, and Port Leschenhault, including Bunbury and Australind. The most valuable assistance has been kindly proffered and thankfully accepted, and the sources to which the friendly zeal of our colonial supporters affords us ready access, are likely to be the earliest and most correct. The price of our monthly sheet may be considered high, as compared with other publications of equal size; but it must be borne in mind, that the community interested in Western Australian matters is so small that our subscription list is not likely to be very extensive, and any charge short of that which we make would incur a positive loss. But, as the population of the colony, and with it our circulation, increases, we pledge ourselves to reduce the price proportionately, and in the interim we trust our friends will not grudge a sixpence monthly spent in behalf of our common cause. The information which we purpose to lay before our readers may here be enumerated, and the general contents of each number thus summed up:—

I.—*Intelligence from the Colony*, to the latest dates and supplied by accurate correspondents on the spot—condensed extracts from the colonial papers, and interesting paragraphs of private letters.

II.—*Home News*, and early information of matters calculated to have an influence on the progression of the colony.

III.—*Articles defensive* of the character of Western Australia, refuting calumnies and correcting errors.

IV.—*Reviews* of, and extracts from, all publications relating to the colony.

V.—*Shipping Lists* of the arrivals and departures of Western Australian vessels, compiled from the best and fullest accounts.

VI.—*Prices Current* of Western Australian markets.

VII.—*Customs Lists* of exports entered for, and imports entered from the colony.

VIII.—*Misdirected Letters List*, of all communications intended for parties in Western Australia, but detained by some inaccuracy at the Dead Letter Office.

IX.—*General Information Table*, stating at a glance the date of the last advices, and for the dispatch of the next mail, the postage of letters, newspapers, &c.

X.—*Births, Marriages, and Deaths* in the colony.

XI.—*Notices to Correspondents*, containing full and ample information in reply to all enquiries respecting the colony, hints and advice to emigrants, &c.

XII.—*Advertisements*, to a limited extent. And, with reference to the latter department, we would offer an invitation to our advertising friends who wish their notices to come under

the eyes of the Western Australian community, as, although our circulation may not be so extensive as that enjoyed by other candidates to their favor, it will be more strictly confined to a certain body, and, consequently, will give more complete publicity to matters of interest to that body.

The gentleman who undertakes the management of the SWAN RIVER NEWS has, for upwards of the last twelve months, conducted the Western Australian department of an anglo-colonial paper, but, as it has been thought that the interests of the other colonies of which that journal is also the advocate, may occasionally clash with those of Western Australia, it has been deemed advisable to establish a distinct publication, which can give its entire and undivided energies to the advancement of the cause—hence the appearance of our monthly sheet.

The favor which our project has met with from the colonists is very great—greater than we could have anticipated. At the present moment we have a letter lying before us, in which the writer (one of the primary movers and present Committee of the Western Australian Society) says—"Your plan of a newspaper, to be published monthly, and to be exclusively devoted to Western Australia, is of course very highly considered here, and we all greatly admire the spirit and energy which must have originated the scheme." And again, in the *Inquirer* of the 29th of March last, the Editor, in alluding to it writes—"Our readers will at once perceive how greatly this arrangement will be to the advantage of the colony." And in the same day's paper, that able and indefatigable champion, "Colonicus" honors our project with the following flattering notice:—"But we have a stronger confirmation of the good already effected by the mere announcement of the Society; we have a triumph greater than any that praise or commendation could bestow upon us. You know to what I allude—to the *great and joyful* intelligence that our exertions have already reaped a glorious harvest—that the formation of the Western Australian Society has been the means of calling into existence a newspaper in London, dedicated expressly and exclusively to the interests of this colony! is this effecting nothing?"

Such are the rhapsodies with which the announcement of our journal was received in the colony, and although the accomplishment of our designs has, from unavoidable causes been delayed, we trust that the delay has only enabled the friends of the colony to gather fresh strength and energy from the manner in which our project has been welcomed by those best able to judge of its probable effects. The observations of our colonial friends are as

flattering as they are encouraging, and we trust that an attempt ushered into existence with such signal marks of approbation, and under such auspices, has no chance of failing for lack of support. The opinions given above are those of practical observers of the wants and necessities of the colony—of experienced, and we had almost said public, men, having every means of information open to their scrutiny, and who thus publicly and positively declare that the contemplated journal would be a *desideratum*. We entertained a strong opinion of its utility, but, confirmed by such testimony, it has now become as strong a conviction; and thus much experience enables us to affirm, that, without such an organ, the success of Western Australia would be but tedious and protracted, while if we can—as we trust we shall—accelerate its progress and protect its interests, we shall be fully and completely remunerated, for such, *and such alone*, are the objects which we have, and shall ever strive to keep, in view. Encouraged by our friends “beyond sea,” we only require the support of those at home to complete our success, and that we are confident will not be withheld from the furtherance of a cause so long depressed by the promulgation of falsehoods, which their was no voice to contradict and by official negligence which there was no pen to expose. We therefore earnestly entreat the aid of all well-wishers of the colony in England; their subscriptions will support our existence—their correspondence furnish us means of information, and both combined enable us to stand forth as champions of Western Australia whenever her name is assailed, or her capabilities called in question. The communications of parties possessing exclusive or interesting information will always be acceptable and gratefully received; whilst those desirous of particulars respecting the colony will be cheerfully answered, and their enquiries fully explained; and as some well-informed supporters of our project in Perth and Fremantle have kindly tendered us their services, this department of our journal will be as comprehensive and worthy of dependence as it is possible to render it.

In conclusion, and to show more particularly the purposes to which we propose to devote our best energies, we may quote the following passages from Mr. Biddulph's letter to Lord Stanley on the pasturage of the waste lands of the Australian Colonies:—“That the colony of the Swan River has triumphed over the severe difficulties with which it has had to struggle—that it has gradually won its way to a prosperous and promising condition—that its records show that its scale of crime has been low, and its agricultural and other improvements great in proportion to a limited population, beyond all example—that large portions

of its territory are more fertile and better watered, and its climate more tempered and less subject to drought than any other of the Australian colonies, are facts either little known or purposely misrepresented.” It is, then, this declaration confirmed by the bitter experience of nearly fourteen years, that has called the SWAN RIVER NEWS into existence. The want of publicity here pointed out as the bane of Western Australia, is what we desire to supply, and the facts which Mr. Biddulph truly says, are “little known,” we trust to be the instruments of asserting. In short our purpose is to disabuse the public mind of the erroneous ideas which it entertains of this misrepresented colony, and, correcting the errors and refuting the falsehoods so prevalent, also to spread and disseminate as widely as we can—THE TRUTH!

All Correspondents, whether asking or affording information, will address their communications to the Editor, care of E. COLYER, 17, Fenchurch-street, where also Advertisements, (to be paid for before insertion), and also books and publications for review are to be sent.—The terms of subscription are 5s. *per annum*, or, forwarded post-free, 6s. 6d. payable in advance, and the price of a single Number will be 5d. The journal will be issued regularly on the first of the month, the size of the present Number, and at the end of the year a full index of the contents will be given.

A first and preliminary number, entailing the necessity of an introduction, and of some outline of our views and intentions, cannot be expected to furnish any mass of information, but although unwilling to raise expectations in our readers' minds which may never be fulfilled, we must beg that they will not look upon this preparatory sheet as a sample of its intended successors, but as principally an expositor of the plans which they are designed to carry out.

In the absence of any recent intelligence, it will be seen that our columns are this month filled with articles of general information relating to the colony, but the distinguishing feature of our future numbers will be the *early* and *exclusive* intelligence which they will furnish, combined of course with descriptive and statistical extracts and contributions, but giving the preference to original details of the position of the colony in a commercial point of view, as a market for our manufactures, as a field for labor, and as an outlet for our surplus population.

COMMUNICATION WITH WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

We had received a letter and prepared an article, on the subject, when the following memorial, relating to the communication between London and Western Australia was put

into our hands. It is addressed to Lord Lowther, and very influentially signed, but although entertaining our own convictions on the subject, it would be obviously premature to speculate on the probabilities of its prayer being complied with:—

“To the Right Honorable Viscount Lowther, Postmaster General, &c. &c.

The memorial of the undersigned merchants, bankers, and others of the city of London, connected in trade or otherwise interested in the welfare of Western Australia, humbly sheweth:—

That your memorialists have lately learned through the medium of the public press, that Her Majesty's Government have been pleased to make arrangements for the dispatch of a mail from the port of London, on the 1st of every month, for Sydney, New South Wales; and seeing the great advantage to the colony that will necessarily arise from such an arrangement, your memorialists respectfully submit that under the same contract, without any additional expense, or incurring more than a trifling delay, a mail may be conveyed by the same vessels to Western Australia, a colony, which although steadily advancing in prosperity, has from various circumstances less direct communication with England than any other of the Australian Colonies. With the view of calling your Lordship's attention to this subject, your memorialists beg leave to point out that Albany, King George's Sound, one of the principal ports of Western Australia, is in the direct tract of vessels bound to New South Wales;—that the roadstead to the harbour is at all times of tide open and easy of access from the ocean:—that it may be entered without a pilot, and that no more than a few hours need be occupied in the delivery of the mail before a vessel may be again on her course to the eastward:—that there is already a mail communication between Albany and Perth, the seat of Government, once or twice a year, contracted for at the low rate of £46 *per annum*, by which the mail from England may be regularly forwarded:—that by such an arrangement, a periodical communication would also be opened between Western Australia and the Eastern colonies, which could not fail greatly to advance the interests of all.

Your memorialists therefore solicit your Lordship to take this application into your most favorable consideration.”

[Here follow the Signatures.]

THE SWAN RIVER NEWS;
LONDON: JANUARY, 1844.

The colonists of Western Australia are at length awake to the absolute necessity of establishing an export trade. Capital is what

is wanted, as much as labor, and by neglecting to export all their available products, both as remittances and as speculations, they have been the unconscious means, not only of preventing the increase of capital, but of reducing the small amount which was already in the colony. Timber, wool, oil, whalebone, wine and live stock, are the articles which are destined to be the elements of wealth, and to establish the prosperity of Western Australia; but from the period of their congregating, the settlers have devoted little attention to this vital subject. They have been content to allow timber, vines, and live stock to continue increasing without caring to convert them into a means of wealth, and wool, oil and whalebone have been exported in such inconsiderable quantities as to form but a very small item in the returns. Articles imported into the colony from other Countries have been paid for with the hard cash which the colonists were so ill able to afford, and the scarcity of labor, in a great measure, prevented their substituting staple products for money in making their repayments. Now, however, they are aroused to a sense of their error, and in a position to correct it. Wool is exported in payment for English imports, and thus the withdrawal of capital from the colony is obviated by the very means which will create fresh capital and fresh demand for labor. As an article of speculation, live stock has recently been exported and timber and wine are engaging much attention; hence in a year or two, we may perhaps look for a fresh source for the introduction of capital. These prospects are satisfactory, so far as they extend at present, but we would urge the colonists on to fresh exertions, to follow up vigorously these primitive attempts. If two vessels were large enough to bring home all the wool last season, taking into consideration the increase of labor and stock, which will have since occurred, five vessels should not suffice next year. The Vineyard society has been exerting itself for the encouragement of vine culture. The Agricultural society takes under its auspices the export of wool, oil and live stock; but there is yet a valuable—an almost inexhaustible material of exportation unadvocated—the indigenous timber. In the interior, and on the coasts, dotting the map at frequent intervals, there is a forest of wealth in the neighbourhood of bays and roads, accessible to shipping and to land carriage; and there stands the wood adapted for naval purposes, for cabinet work, for general use, inviting speculation, its efficacy attested by certificates of those who have tried it; and what might be alone and in itself an immense source of wealth to the colonists is neglected—none have yet had the spirit or the energy to attempt any enterprising system of exportation. But after all we doubt whether the colonists are

so much to blame as English capitalists. Their limited command of labor and capital prevents their entering into a speculation, which, however promising, requires both, and we believe they have the will, but do not possess the means of availing themselves of what nature has so bountifully placed within their reach. Here again then we have to repine at that absence of emigration, the evils of which exhibit themselves in every detail of the colony's history; but the infatuation of capitalists at home who, knowing the existence of these mines of wealth prefer embarking in hazardous speculations connected with Maryland or Pennsylvania, is unaccountable. And this brings us to make some remarks on another matter in which this infatuation is again developed. The bays and coasts of the colony are perhaps as prolific whaling grounds, amply supplied with cheap and secure harbours, as any in the world, as the continued and abundant resort of foreign whalers proves; yet the statistics of the colony show that the proportion of English vessels fitted for the purpose which visit them is most insignificant as compared with those of America and France. The colonists have not the means of embarking in the speculation but to a very limited extent, and the little oil that is annually exported is principally purchased from the foreign whalers!—Thus are our monied countrymen not only, as with regard to the timber, investing their cash in very doubtful foreign speculations, when they might do so with far more security in a colony of their own empire, but they even allow those foreigners, whose dupes they are, to enjoy an almost total monopoly of the profits of those settlements which their own taxes have contributed to form. We address these observations more particularly to English capitalists,—and we know we have the honor of counting several wealthy firms among our subscribers,—but we entreat them not to accept our bare assertion of the facts, but to make strict enquiries, and we are convinced they will find that, so far from exaggerating, we have actually underrated the capabilities of the colony as a field for enterprise.

But we have been led, by the connexion of the subjects to extend our remarks more fully than we had intended; and there is an important topic, also relating to the matter of exports, and on which we had wished to touch, still left unnoticed—the actions of a corn-law, imposing a duty on all imported grain, in its bearings on the agricultural and commercial prosperity of the colony. This question, which was argued at considerable length at a recent session of the legislative council, is rather extensive in its ramifications, and as our space is necessarily contracted, we must reserve what we have to say on the subject for a future number.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CHINA CLAY OF SWAN RIVER.

To the Editor of the Swan River News.

Sir.—As every article of export is of primary importance to a young colony, I beg to call your attention to the China Clay of Swan River. It is found near the half-way house on the old road from Guildford to York, and may be had apparently in any quantity. It is exceedingly white and pure, and burns to a brilliant white and extreme hardness; it is in fact a near approach to the Kaolin of China, which has never been found out of that country. A sample, of at least half a ton, should be sent to England, to be distributed to some of the principal potteries for trial. Should it prove adapted for the manufacture of the finest porcelain china, it will be invaluable, for no European china has yet been manufactured perfectly equal in all its qualities to that made by the Chinese themselves, merely from the want of the exact materials; for in workmanship and design we are far superior.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
 Parkstone, HENRY W. REVELEY,
 Dec. 18th, 1843. Architect and Civil Engineer.

LABOUR WANTED!—From the speech of Governor Hutt, on the opening of the Legislative Council, we make the following extract, which holds out great encouragement to emigrants, and, coming from so high a quarter, may be implicitly relied on;—"During the last year, the population has received an accession of one-fourth to its numbers, by the arrival, within rather more than fifteen months, of immigrants, who have all found ready and profitable service, whilst no very marked reduction has taken place in wages, and, in some parts of the country, complaints are still made of a want of hands for farming and stock operations."

THE SHIP "TRUSTY."—The ship *Trusty*, of 365 tons, John Elsdon, master, left the West India Docks for Swan River, on the 9th of December, with a general cargo, and the following passengers;—For Swan River, (Cabin) Miss Welliton; Messrs. Burgess, A. Shenton, Bradshaw, and Hoop; (Steerage) Thomas and Richard Carney, and Mrs. Pomeroy. For Australind; Mr. and Mrs. Allnutt, and two children; Mr. and Mrs. Piggott, and infant; Mr. and Mrs. King, and eight children; Mr. Mrs. and Miss Narroway; and Messrs. J. Piggott, Best and Gibbs.

RUMOURED NEW SETTLEMENT.

The *Inquirer* of the 14th of June, contains a notice of a report prevalent among the natives of a number of white men having been