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I.—*The Progress of the Colony of Victoria.*—By Alfred Webb, Esq.

[Read 16th June, 1856.]

How has it happened that the colony of Victoria—occupying a central position with regard to the other Australian colonies, and possessing a fine soil, a genial climate, and greater mineral wealth than any other part of the globe—has caused disappointment and ruin to thousands of emigrants, and even became at one time the scene of bloodshed and civil war? This is the question which I shall this evening attempt to answer: not so much from statistical details as from my own observations made on the spot.

In 1853 I visited Australia in search of health, and spent the greater part of two years in the colony of Victoria. I resided some months in Melbourne, spent a year under a tent in the bush, visited the gold diggings at Reedy Creek and the Ovens, and travelled six hundred miles overland to Sydney. During that time I saw much to shock me in the state of society, especially in the dissolute and intemperate habits of the labouring classes; and I felt that there must be some explanation of this lamentable state of things, besides that afforded by the convict element, and the unsettled state of society occasioned by the discovery of gold.

A short sketch of the rise and progress of this colony will, perhaps, justify me in the conclusion to which I came, that most of these evils are to be attributed to the difficulty of procuring land; the labourer, in receipt of large wages, being thus deprived of the inducement to save his earnings and invest them in a settled home.

The efforts of Mrs. Chisholm and other benevolent persons, to encourage emigration and send out willing hands to turn the Australian wilderness into a garden, were very well in theory. But these philanthropists overlooked, or were ignorant of the fact, that, with the exception of the squatters (who are but a small portion of the community), the bushmen had no homes, nor any portion of the wilderness to turn into gardens; that for want of these they are leading a half-savage life, rarely stopping with one employer more than a few weeks, and spending their earnings in gross excess and licentiousness. Thus these well-intentioned efforts were worse than useless; and Mrs. Chisholm herself has had bitterly to regret her mistake, and to declare that, had she known the difficulty of procuring land in Australia, she would never have recommended emigration thither as a remedy for the social evils of her own country.

Although New South Wales was settled in 1788, and Van Diemen's Land in 1804, it was not until 1834 that the first permanent settlement was effected in Victoria—or, as it was then called, "the Port Philip District." In that year, Mr. Henty, of Launceston (Van Diemen's Land), encouraged by the reports of whalers and others who had visited the coasts of South Australia, conveyed a number of sheep across Bass's Strait, and commenced a pasturage and whaling establishment at Portland Bay.

The following year, Mr. Bateman, in conjunction with some companions, purchased six hundred thousand acres from the natives of Port Philip, for about £200 worth of trinkets, and settled on a promontory in Port Philip Bay, now known as Indented Head. They were not long left in quiet possession, for before many days a vessel passed their settlement and anchored higher up the Bay. This was a rival party of colonists from Launceston, headed by Mr. Falkner, who has ever since been one of the most able and energetic men in the colony. Mr. Falkner's party proceeded eight miles up the river Yarra Yarra, and selected a spot for their settlement where no white man had ever stood before; and which is now, after twenty-one years, the site of the city of Melbourne, with her shipping, steamers, and wharves; her banks, theatres, and hotels; and her port thronged with the vessels of all nations.

Many others of Mr. Falkner's associates soon arrived; and Mr. Bateman, alarmed at this invasion of his territory, went up from Indented Head, and established a rival camp in sight of Falkner's. He applied to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land against Falkner's invasion, and being dissatisfied with the decision, he applied to the home government, who disallowed his claims, but awarded him and his companions £7,000 as compensation for their enterprise as first settlers.

The country being now thrown open, crowds of adventurers flocked over from Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales, with cattle, sheep, and horses, and the land was widely occupied with their flocks and herds. These early settlers endured terrible hardships and difficulties; their stock perished in great numbers in the bush-fires that constantly ravaged the country, and they suffered still more severely from the incursions and determined hostility of

the blacks.* Doubtless this hostility was owing, in the first instance, to the white man's aggressions on their territory, and to the violence and injustice with which the settlers often acted towards them. It is hard to say how far civilized nations are justified in the means they take to establish their authority in barbarous regions; but wherever the white man plants his foot, a baptism of blood is almost sure to follow before he establishes his claim to possession. The quarrel in Port Philip soon became a struggle between pillage and murder on the one hand, and ruthless barbarity and cold-blooded massacre on the other. Bread poisoned with arsenic was purposely left in the way of the blacks—the water-holes near which they were likely to congregate were poisoned in the same deadly manner,—regular parties were made up to shoot them. The rifle, the poison, and the rum of the white man, were more than a match for the wooden weapons and the cunning of the black; and, within the precincts of the colony, the aboriginal inhabitants are now a broken-spirited and degraded race.

In 1836, the Port Philip district was in such a flourishing condition, that the New South Wales government did it the honour of annexing the territory to their own, and sent a magistrate to assert their supremacy, who called a meeting of the inhabitants, at which the sites of Melbourne, Williamstown, Geelong, and Portland were confirmed.

In 1837, the population amounted to three thousand; and Sir Richard Burke (the greatest and best of all the Australian governors) paid the colony a visit. He further confirmed the selection of sites for townships, and directed that their sale should commence immediately. Melbourne was laid out, surveyed, and divided into allotments, which were put up for sale. A reign of ruinous speculation in land now commenced. With an unlimited extent of land at its disposal, the government sold it only in small quantities at a time. These were speedily bought up by speculators, by whom they were sold and resold many times; so that an allotment which in 1837 had sold for £50, rose to £4,000 in 1839. The titles fell into inextricable confusion; and the whole proceeding ended in a commercial crisis and a general crash in 1840. Land fell to one-tenth of its former price; and many were ruined by this deteriora-

* The term native is applied to a white person born in the colony. "The blacks" is the only appellation by which the aborigines are designated.

† I can vouch for the truth of the following incident, which occurred about twelve years ago, when the colonial government was just beginning to put down such barbarities with a strong hand. I have often seen B., who is still living.

B. and M. made an excursion on some business affairs into the Eumeralla district, about two hundred miles from Melbourne. Being at a loss for amusement, they set off one day to "shoot a few blacks." They did not meet any of the men, but came upon an encampment of women and children; some of whom they maltreated and butchered. When they had finished this exploit, M. saw that they had been observed by a white stockrider who was passing. He promptly mounted a fleet and strong horse, rode to Melbourne in twenty-four hours, paid some visits, and returned home at his leisure. The miscreants were arrested and brought up for trial. M., however, brought forward witnesses who proved his presence in Melbourne twenty-four hours after the time he was alleged to have been an actor in the butchery at the Eumeralla; and as it was considered impossible that he could have been at the two places within such a short space of time, the trial was quashed, and the prisoners liberated.

tion in the value of their property. Others were reduced to great distress, and had to seek homes in the adjoining colonies.

After two years of great depression, matters began to mend; and by 1845 the colony was in a healthier and better condition than ever. The population had increased to 28,000; the imports to £248,000, and the exports (principally of wool and tallow) to £464,000 per annum; the two latter having doubled within a year. The squatters had found it more profitable to boil down their sheep and export the tallow, than to sell them at a merely nominal price.

I shall now look back a few years to trace the progress of the land question.

The original settlers took possession, as squatters, of as much land as they found necessary for the pasturage of their flocks and herds. This was, indeed, the most natural arrangement at the commencement of the colony, nor had the government power to order it otherwise. Those who wanted to *buy* land paid five shillings an acre. Things went on very well in this way; the squatters first occupying the land and then buying it for themselves, or else giving place to others and moving back upon unoccupied tracts. And so they would have continued to do, were it not for the interference of the home government, influenced by the colonizing schemes of Mr. Gibbon Wakefield. The plan of this gentleman was to sell the lands by auction at the high upset price of £1 per acre, and thus secure the land in the hands of men of property, and keep the colonists concentrated. The proceeds of the sales were to be devoted to the introduction of free emigrants, so that the settlers of capital might be well supplied with labour at low rates. By dint of puffing, false statements, and denouncing all opponents as interested parties, he gained the attention of the English press and government to his plan for making his colony of South Australia a "model colony," he obtained a charter, and formed a company for carrying out his projects. But after a short time of apparent prosperity, his plan proved a complete failure. Capitalists found it did not pay to give a pound an acre for land at the other side of the globe, and renounce all the comforts of home and civilization in order to occupy it; while those who were really fit for colonists, hard-working industrious men with small means, could not afford to pay such a price. Very little land was sold, beyond what was bought up at the first rush; there were, therefore, no funds to send home for labourers, and wages consequently rose to such a height that agricultural pursuits were abandoned, and the colonists spread over the country to find pasture for their stock on land for which they paid nothing. And thus, results exactly opposite to the anticipated *concentration* and *cheap labour* were arrived at.

But as yet the fallacy of the scheme was not detected. When Mr. G. Wakefield and his coadjutors saw that it did not work well, they addressed the home government to the following effect:—"How can our settlement attract emigrants, while the adjacent colony of New South Wales is selling land at five shillings per acre? Raise land there to the same price as ours, and we shall then get on smoothly together." Acting on this suggestion, the government, which seems to have placed implicit confidence in Mr. Wake-

field's views, directed Governor Bourke to raise the price of land in New South Wales to one pound per acre. He, however, foreseeing the bad results that would follow, acted on his own responsibility and continued the former upset price of five shillings.

Unfortunately for the colony, Governor Bourke was in 1838 superseded by Sir George Gipps; and the Wakefield party renewing their demands, the home government directed that the land in New South Wales should be raised to twelve shillings per acre; at the same time instructing the governor to take measures for checking the sale of land even at twelve shillings, if he should observe that the extension of the population took place with a rapidity beyond what was desirable, and that the want of labour continued to be seriously felt.

But nothing was gained by the change. People would not pay the high price for land; settlers continued to spread over the country as squatters; the land-sales almost entirely ceased, and so did emigration.

Still the home government was prepared to go farther in backing up Mr. Wakefield; and in 1842 they passed an Act (5 and 6 Vict. c. 36) "for regulating the sale of waste land belonging the crown in the Australian colonies." The substance of this Act was, that no lands must be held unless they had been bought or were held by licence; the lowest upset price to be £1 per acre; leases to be granted for not longer than twelve months; and half of the proceeds of the land-sales to be applied towards introducing emigrants from home. It was left to the governor to raise the price of any land he thought worth more than £1 per acre, and to issue such regulations as he might see fit for the occupation of waste lands.

Empowered by this Act, Sir George Gipps issued a code of regulations, reducing the size of "runs" to twenty square miles. On these he imposed an annual licence of £10; and by assessments on stock and other regulations he did all in his power to force the squatters to buy their runs; which it was clearly impossible they could do, at the high price at which alone land was legally sold—since a "reduced" run of twenty square miles would require a sum of upwards of £12,000 to purchase it.

As might be expected, these regulations met with strong opposition; not only from the squatters, but from the rest of the community, who foresaw in the downfall of the squatters their own ruin. They formed an association for the vindication of their rights; claimed fixity of tenure by lease, with right of pre-emption; and refused to pay taxes. The whole country was convulsed; meetings were held in Sydney and in Melbourne, at which the speakers advocated total separation from the mother country, if the obnoxious regulations were not rescinded.

After the retirement of Sir George Gipps in 1847, the government went from one extreme to another. Instead of refusing, as heretofore, to make any concession, they passed an order in council which virtually handed over the whole colony into the hands of the squatters. They were granted leases, (with the right of pre-emption, for 320 acres or upwards, at one pound per acre without auction) and at the termination the lease they might claim compensation for im-

provement. The rent, which was calculated on a poll-tax of 4,000 sheep and 600 head of cattle as a minimum number, effectually excluded all small capitalists from the occupation of the land; the upset price of one pound per acre remained the same.

However, notwithstanding these regulations and changes, the district of Port Philip continued to thrive, and in 1849 the population amounted to 60,000. They began to feel it a grievance to have their legislation carried on at Sydney, 700 miles off; especially as the government of New South Wales was not very scrupulous in appropriating the Port Philip revenues to its own purposes.

It was not long ere their desire was granted; and on the 2nd of July, 1851, Port Philip was proclaimed an independent colony, under the name of Victoria.

About a month before that date, gold was discovered in New South Wales by Mr. Hargreaves, an old Californian, who had been led to suspect its presence by the similarity of the country to California. The colonists could not have been more astonished if a magazine of gunpowder had exploded beneath them, than they were at finding that the ground they had been walking over contained such treasures. I have been told that shepherds and others had found nuggets of gold long before the public discovery, and that some canny people got rich in this way, but kept the secret to themselves.

In September, 1851, two months after the independence of the colony was proclaimed, it was disclosed to the world and to the astonished Victorians that their country was richer in gold than any other known spot of the earth. All the able-bodied men rushed off forthwith to the diggings, in the vicinity of Mount Alexander; thousands poured in from the adjacent colonies; and when the report, in a highly exaggerated form, reached Europe, ships could not be found sufficient to convey the multitudes who were anxious to share in the golden harvest. Wages, and the price of all articles of consumption, reached unprecedented rates, and the import trade more than quadrupled.

In four months after gold was discovered, it was procured at the rate of £250,000 worth monthly. Government organized a large body of mounted troopers for the protection of life and property at the gold fields, and appointed commissioners for the administration of justice. The expenses of this new department were defrayed by a monthly tax of thirty shillings on each digger. About three months after the imposition of this license, the government announced that they were about to double it; but this measure met with such decided opposition that they withdrew it immediately.

This readiness of the government to impose an exorbitant tax, and the subsequent weakness of withdrawing it as soon as opposition arose, had a bad effect on such a mixed class as the diggers. It lessened their respect for the consideration and firmness of the authorities, and gave them a great idea of their own strength.

During 1852, the excitement of the gold fever continued on the increase. Immigrants poured into Melbourne at the rate of 10,000 weekly; and much misery was caused by the crowding of such

multitudes into a country totally unprepared for them, and by the fact that thousands of these strangers were entirely unfit for the kind of work required of them in their new circumstances. Of this I have, myself, seen some lamentable instances. I knew a man who was employed as cook for thirty shillings a week, and who had given up a situation of £500 per annum, in London, to better himself in Australia; I have seen ex-Manchester cotton-spinners, and army and navy officers, working at the hardest manual labour; and, on one occasion, I met in the bush a navy lieutenant driving a dray for a digger and his wife, who allowed him only his diet for his services. He had lived for a time in Dublin in the days of his prosperity, and spoke regretfully of the delights of a lounge up Grafton-street on a fine afternoon, of evenings at the Theatre Royal, and of suppers at Jude's.

The treasures obtained at the diggings by men unaccustomed to such a flood of wealth, were squandered in the most reckless manner. Melbourne was full of lucky diggers, whose only object was to get rid of their money as fast as possible. Some ate bank-notes between slices of bread and butter, as sandwiches; others stood at the corners of the streets with tubs of brandy, offering drink to the passers-by; or drove about the streets, drinking and shouting, in carriages for which they paid at the rate of twenty pounds per day. It was an insult to offer change to one of these gentlemen, who would fling a handfull of money to the shopman and tell him to take as much as he liked.

The publicans were the chief winners from this wild extravagance. Many of these have retired, after being six or twelve months in business, with fortunes of £40,000 or £50,000. I have known many instances of men spending £800 or £900 at a public house in two or three weeks. It was not alone by diggers that this madness was practised; the high wages received by workmen vanished, to a great extent, in the same manner. At that time labourers were paid fifteen shillings for a day's work; carpenters, twenty-eight shillings; bricklayers, thirty shillings; and plasterers even three pounds per day. The recipients of these enormous wages were often worse off (owing to the ruinous way in which they spent their money) than if they had been working at home for low wages and living on bread and water.

Now was the time to throw land freely into the market, and open a rational and profitable way to invest these unusual and ill-spent earnings. Millions of money would, doubtless, have been thus invested, had the land been easily attainable. I have no doubt that thousands who went to the colony with the intention of settling, left it in disgust on finding it almost impossible to obtain a tenure of the soil.

We have seen that the orders in council of 1847, besides fixing the high rate of one pound per acre, virtually handed the country over to the squatters. The consequence was that every acre of land that was sold, even at that high rate, was sold against the will of this class. And as they were the dominant party in the Legislative Council and in the Executive, they threw every obstacle in the way of free sale. With millions of acres at their disposal,

and thousands of people eager to buy, the authorities doled out the land in miserable handfulls. During 1852, only 250,000 acres were sold, at an average of £6 per acre. In the suburbs of Melbourne land was sold for £20,000 per acre. A friend of mine paid, until lately, at the rate of £2,600 per annum for a house in Melbourne, about the size of an ordinary house in Dame-street. In company with some friends I rented a small four-roomed cottage, each room about twelve feet square, for which we paid at the rate of £200 a year, weekly, in advance. As one result of this state of things, people were crowded and huddled together in the Melbourne boarding-houses like pigs; and many of the new arrivals had to spend their nights in the streets of Melbourne, or among the goods on the wharves, before they could get lodgings of any kind.

The streets and wharves of Melbourne were at this time in a deplorable state. What with the scarcity and dearness of labour, and the incessant arrival of goods and emigrants, there was no time for constructing or repairing them, and in the rainy season they were like quagmires. Thousands of pounds' worth of property were swallowed up in the mud on the wharves, and never recovered. The freight of goods from the harbour up to Melbourne (a distance of eight miles) was nearly as high as the previous freight from Great Britain. Cartage to the diggings rose to £120 per ton, for the distance of 80 miles; so that, high as the prices of goods were in Melbourne, they were doubly so at the diggings.

The state of the tracks to the diggings (for roads there were none) was the chief cause of these high rates of carriage. The teams proceeded at a snail's pace. The unfortunate bullocks and horses now floundering through quagmires, now stemming swollen creeks and rivers, or ascending hills that would astonish the boldest drivers on the wildest road in Kerry. Drays were often two or three months in going the distance of 70 or 80 miles. On one occasion, during the winter, I spent a week in going 40 miles with a dray; on some days we had to unload the dray three times to lighten the bullocks.

Society was, at this time, in a highly disorganized state. Robbery and violence were perpetrated in the open day, almost with impunity; the police often being in league with the marauders. At three o'clock one afternoon, a body of bushrangers took possession of the road between Melbourne and its suburb St. Kilda, and robbed and maltreated all who passed. The ship *Nelson* lay in Hobson's Bay, ready to sail for England, with 4,000 oz. of gold on board. Some desperadoes put off to her in a boat, surprised and bound the crew, rigged a tackle into the hold, and hauled up the gold, swearing it was the finest diggings they ever made. The gold escort from the M'IVOR diggings was stopped and robbed, and several of the troopers shot. The daring and ferocious exploits of these bushrangers would fill volumes. Of course many were brought to justice, and during the first six weeks of my stay in Melbourne, there were six public executions.

Towards the end of the year 1852, the government began to attempt something towards ameliorating the unsettled state of affairs. Wooden wharves were erected; enormous sums were voted by the Colonial Legislature for the formation of roads and bridges on the

way to the diggings, and for macadamizing the streets of Melbourne. Much was thus effected, and much more might have been done but for the extravagance and the shameful jobbing that were carried on.

A strong body of efficient police was organised, and contributed greatly towards the restoration of confidence and security. New diggings were constantly being discovered, chiefly through the enterprise of Americans, and the yield of gold reached the high average of one million sterling per month. Still the average earnings on the gold fields were below the average rate of wages throughout the rest of the colony. Indeed it must always be so in gold-digging countries; for so long as a man can live and support himself at the diggings (where he has a *chance* of making his fortune) he will not be likely to leave them, unless more than his average earnings are offered him elsewhere.

The statistical statements connected with the early history of Victoria are vague and often contradictory; but the following table is given from the official report of the Gold Field Commission:—

	1852	1853	1854
Value of gold produced -----	£14,866,789 ..	£11,588,782 ..	£8,770,796
Population on diggings -----	35,000 ..	73,000 ..	100,000
Average earnings of each digger..	£420 ..	£180 ..	£82

The stream of immigration continued unabated during the first half of 1853, averaging 2,500 weekly. In May, 1853, the enormous pouring in of merchandize on a population of only 200,000 persons, began to have a most depressing effect on trade; and, as the influx of goods still continued, the market for most articles became completely glutted. Goods were often sold at a price that scarcely covered the freight and charges; and many speculators made well by buying goods and shipping them home to England. The total imports in 1853 were valued at about sixteen millions sterling, or £80 a head for each colonist; which far exceeded the natural demand.

The dissatisfaction occasioned on the diggings by the licence fee of 30s. per month, and especially by the arbitrary and intolerable manner in which it was collected, had reached its climax; and in September, 1853, many large armed meetings were held at the Bendigo and other diggings to protest against it. The government was alarmed, and appointed a committee to enquire into the causes of the discontent. The commission sat, made some investigations, and recommended several slight amendments, which were carried out; but the evil was too gigantic to be so easily coped with. Nothing was done to purify the corrupt administration at the gold fields, or to throw land freely into the market, and we shall see the results of this neglect.

Next to 1851, the year of the gold discovery, the year 1854 is the most important in the annals of the colony of Victoria.

Soon after the discovery of the gold, Governor Latrobe sent home his resignation, feeling unable to deal with the requirements of the new state of things. The government remained in the hands of commissioners, till Admiral Sir Charles Hotham arrived from England to take the reins. His reception was most enthusiastic, for much was hoped from his reputation for energy and ability. Unfortunately these favourable anticipations were not realized; his position would

have required a man of greater tact and talent than he possessed, and was indeed a very difficult one. Hampered by the provisions of Acts of Parliament, badgered by the colonial press, and embarrassed by the claims of the squatters on the one hand and the diggers on the other, his situation was most unenviable; and there is little doubt that his death, in the early part of this year, was caused by the disappointment and annoyance he underwent.

The continued imports on the already depressed market in the middle of 1854, added to the decline in the yield of gold, and the enormous arrivals of immigrants, resulted in a crash amongst the mercantile community. One great failure led to another, and a general panic ensued. In 1853 there had been 25 cases of insolvency in Melbourne; in 1854, the number amounted to 186. Almost all public works and private buildings were suspended; wages fell lower and lower, and at length it became difficult to get employment in Melbourne on almost any terms. The value of land and of rents fell to about a quarter of what they had been; and it was found that the colony was upwards of three millions sterling in debt, betraying great incapacity or extravagance on the part of government. This critical state of affairs contributed to fan the flame of discontent, which broke out at the Ballarat diggings in 1854.

I have mentioned that the amendments which were passed by the Commissioners in September, 1853, with respect to the licence fees, and other matters at the gold fields, failed to meet the case or to give satisfaction. Public meetings were constantly held, and other demonstrations made, but nothing serious had yet occurred. In October, 1854, a man was murdered in a hotel at Ballarat, and the landlord (a Mr. Bentley) was suspected of being implicated. After much noise about it, he was brought before the police magistrates; a superficial examination ensued, and he was acquitted, though the evidence was clearly against him. It was supposed that some of the magistrates had a share in his hotel, and that he owed his acquittal to this fact. A great outcry was raised,—the people took the law into their own hands and burnt down the hotel, and Bentley with difficulty escaped with his life. The government appointed a commission to inquire into the affair, and the result was, that the popular suspicions were confirmed with reference to two members of the bench and a serjeant of police. Bentley was again arrested, tried, and found guilty of manslaughter. Still there was no reform in the administration on the gold-fields, and things were allowed to jog on in the old style.

Towards the end of November, a large meeting of the diggers was held at Ballarat; they unfurled the banner of the Southern Cross, burned all their licences, and resolved to take out no more. Next day the commissioners collected a large body of police, and went round among the diggers, requiring them to produce their licences—a highly imprudent step in the excited state of the public mind. The diggers showed a defiant front, the Riot Act was read, and the first blood spilled. The diggers organized themselves into a body, and having been drilled in large numbers by some old soldiers of their party, they entrenched themselves behind a stockade, and

levied a "black mail" of guns, ammunition and provisions from the storekeepers. On Sunday morning, December 3rd, the military and police stormed their stockade, carried it, and dispersed the diggers—thirty of the insurgents being killed, forty wounded, and one hundred and fourteen taken prisoners. The military had only four killed and thirteen wounded.

The direction which the sympathies of the colonists took on this occasion may be inferred from the fact, that when the prisoners were taken to Melbourne for trial, they were one and all acquitted. One of the ringleaders, for whose apprehension a reward of £500 was offered, is now a member of the Legislative Council.

This terrible outbreak convinced the government of the uselessness of half measures. Another commission was appointed, and after a lengthened, careful, and impartial investigation, they gave it as their opinion that the insurrection was owing to the following causes :—

"(1.) The license fee, or more properly the unseemly violence often necessary for its due collection,—a result entirely unavoidable in thus taxing for this considerable rate every individual of a great mass of laboring population: involving, as it did, repeated conflicts with the police, an ill-will to the authorities, from their almost continuous "hunt" to detect unlicensed persons, and the constant infraction of the law on the part of the miners, resulting sometimes from accident in losing the license document, or from absolute inability to pay for it, as well as from any attempt to evade the charge.

"(2.) The land grievance; the inadequacy of the supplies of land as compared with the wants of the population; the want of sufficiently frequent opportunities, and upon reasonable terms, for the acquisition of a piece of land; the difficulty, amounting with thousands to an impossibility, of investing their small capital or their earnings of gold upon a section of ground; from want of which facilities many thousands, it is to be feared, have left and are still leaving this colony to enrich other countries with their industry and capital.

"(3.) The want of political rights and recognised status; the mining population of this colony having been hitherto, in fact, an entirely non-privileged body, invidiously distinct from the remainder of the colonists, consisting of large numbers without gradations of public rank, political representation, or any system for self-elected local authority; in short, contributing largely to the wealth and greatness of the colony, without enjoying any voice whatever in its public administrations."

They recommended an entire alteration in the administration on the gold fields; the extension of political rights to the diggers as well as to the other sections of the community, and the imposition of a very low licence-fee to maintain a small police force at the diggings. To supply the deficit in the revenue, caused by the abolition of the old licence fee, they proposed an export duty of 2s. 6d. per ounce (or about three per cent.) on gold. But, above all things, they recommended that land should be freely thrown into the market.

Most of these suggestions have been carried into effect. And now that the crisis of danger has passed, and the colony has the management of its own affairs, there is every reason to look forward to a brilliant future for Victoria. By the latest accounts gold is being procured in greater quantities than ever, and by the aid of machinery a great deal of what had been hitherto unprofitable digging is being worked to great advantage; the improvements and number of public works that are going forward have caused a renewed demand for labor; commerce is carried on in a more

healthy manner, and things on the whole appear to be as prosperous as ever. But a cheap and plentiful supply of lands is of the first importance to the prosperity of the colony; and it is only when she offers this to the world that she may expect that free and healthy emigration to her shores which is indispensable to her permanent advancement and prosperity.

APPENDIX.

Year.	Population.	Imports.	Exports.	Land sold.	Value of Wool.
		£	£	Acres.	£
1836	1,000				
1837	3,000		14,000		10,000
1838	5,000	71,000	21,000	39,000	19,000
1839	7,000	205,000	78,000	38,000	70,000
1840	10,000	392,000	155,000	83,000	150,000
1841	14,000	335,000	139,000	51,000	120,000
1842	19,000	264,000	204,000	9,000	150,000
1843	22,000	183,000	278,000	1,000	200,000
1844	24,000	151,000	257,000	200	200,000
1845	28,000	284,000	464,000	4,000	300,000
1846	34,000	316,000	425,000	5,000	300,000
1847	42,000	438,000	669,000	26,000	400,000
1848	50,000	374,000	675,000	23,000	400,000
1849	60,000	480,000	755,000	23,000	600,000
1850	70,000	745,000	1,042,000	100,000	800,000
1851	95,000	1,056,000	1,424,000	70,000	700,000
1852	180,000	4,044,000	7,451,000	257,000	1,000,000
1853*	220,000	15,842,000	11,061,000	300,000	1,600,000

II.—*Observations on the Present Export of Silver to the East.*—By Richard Hussey Walsh, LL.B., late Whately Professor of Political Economy in the University of Dublin.†

So far back as the time when Pliny termed India the sink of the precious metals, silver was a favourite article of export to the East. It has continued so since, but of late the trade has assumed an extraordinary magnitude. In the five years prior to the present, over £22,000,000 have been exported through England alone to India and China; and from other countries a similar movement has been in operation. In 1855, the exportation from England reached the amount of £6,400,000, and this year it is proceeding at the rate of upwards of £10,000,000 per annum, judging from the returns

* I have not been able to procure reliable statistics for the years 1854 and 1855.

† Read before the Statistical Section of the British Association, Cheltenham, August 12th, 1856.