

POLITICAL DIVISIONS.

THE Seven Colonies of Australasia, which now possess a population of over four millions, and a degree and distribution of material wealth scarcely paralleled by any other community on the globe, were unknown and undreamt of a little more than a century ago. It is the object of these pages to present a short account of the magnificent development to which these infant States have already attained, and to show, in reference to the various elements of prosperity which go to build up a nation, their importance, not only as compared with one another, but also as regards the world at large.

The earliest attempt at settlement in Australasia was the foundation of the Colony of New South Wales, which took place in 1788. Colonisation was commenced in Tasmania in 1804, in Western Australia in 1829, in Victoria in 1834, in South Australia in 1836, in New Zealand in 1840, and in 1842 the district of Moreton Bay, in Queensland, was proclaimed open to free settlement, although as far back as 1825 this locality had been used as a penal settlement. Originally, the colonies now known as Victoria and Queensland formed part of New South Wales, while Western Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand were, prior to being proclaimed separate colonies, dependencies of New South Wales. South Australia, from the date of first permanent settlement, was established a separate Colony.

The first settlement in New South Wales, the oldest Colony of the group, was effected by an expedition under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, who landed at Botany Bay on 19th January, 1788, and formally took possession of the whole continent. Botany Bay being found unsuitable, the fleet was brought round to Port Jackson, and the city of Sydney founded on the 26th January of the same year. New South Wales was proclaimed a Colony on the 7th of the following month, and its boundaries were defined as extending from Cape York, the northern extremity of Queensland, 10° 37' south latitude, to South East Cape, the most southerly point of Tasmania, 43° 39' south latitude, and from the 135th degree of east longitude to the east coast, including

adjacent islands. The boundaries thus defined include the whole of the territories now known as New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, and about half of the area of South Australia. Though the Colony was originally a penal settlement, free immigration existed from the first, and after the abolition of transportation in 1840 all traces of the penal element were rapidly lost. The Constitution Act of New South Wales was assented to on the 16th July, 1855, and proclaimed on the 24th November of the same year; and the first representative Parliament was opened on the 22nd May, 1856. The boundaries of the Colony at the date of proclamation included that portion of the continent now known as Queensland, but were exclusive of Victoria, which had been made a separate Colony in 1851.

Tasmania, formerly known as Van Diemen's Land, was colonised from New South Wales, having been intended to serve the purpose of a subsidiary penal settlement. Lieutenant Bowen, in charge of an expedition despatched from Sydney, took possession of the island on the 12th September, 1803, and formed a settlement on the east bank of the Derwent River, at Risdon; but the actual commencement of colonisation dates from February, 1804, when Lieutenant-Colonel Collins established himself at Sullivan's Cove, and laid the foundations of the present city of Hobart. The Government was administered from Sydney until the year 1825, when, in the month of December, Van Diemen's Land was duly constituted an independent province. In May, 1853, it was officially announced that transportation had ceased, and in the following year the name of the Colony was changed from Van Diemen's Land to Tasmania. The Royal assent to the existing Constitution Act was proclaimed on the 24th October, 1855, and the first representative Parliament was opened on the 2nd December, 1856.

The foundation of the Colony of Western Australia dates from the year 1826, when Major Lockyer landed at Albany in charge of an expedition from Sydney, consisting of a detachment of the 39th Regiment and a number of prisoners. In 1827, Captain Stirling arrived in H.M.S. "Success," and explored the Swan River, with a view to establishing a permanent settlement on its banks; and in June, 1829, Captain Fremantle landed near its mouth, and in the same year the town of Perth was founded. The Colony was known originally as the Swan River settlement; it was made a separate Colony on the 1st June, 1829, Captain Stirling being appointed the first Governor. Western Australia remained a Crown Colony under the direct control of the British Government until 20th October, 1890. The present Constitution Act of Western Australia was assented to on the 15th August, 1890; it was proclaimed on 21st October, and the first representative Parliament was opened on the 30th December in the same year.

The first attempt to settle Victoria was made in 1803. On the 7th October of that year Lieutenant-Colonel Collins arrived from England with the intention of founding in Port Phillip a convict settlement

similar to that which had been established at Sydney. The expedition landed on the shores of Port Phillip, near Sorrento, and several explorations of the country were made ; but in the course of a few months the attempt at colonisation was abandoned, as the place was believed to be unsuitable for a settlement. For twenty years the District of Port Phillip, as it was called, continued to be neglected. In 1824, Hume and Hovell undertook an exploration of the territory to the south and west of the land then known to the settlers. They reached, it is believed, the western arm of Port Phillip, not far from the present town of Geelong. In 1826 another expedition, under Captain S. Wright, was sent from Sydney to form a settlement at Western Port, but returned by order of Governor Darling, after one year's trial, although the reports of Hume and Hovell, and the officers of the military, were favourable to the occupation being continued. The first permanent settlement took place in 1834, at Portland Bay, by Mr. Edward Henty. In May, 1835, John Batman arrived at Port Phillip, from Launceston, Tasmania, and obtained from the aborigines tracts of land covering an area of 600,000 acres on the shores of Port Phillip and the banks of the Yarra, but the grants were afterwards disallowed by the Imperial Government. In August of the same year another party, under the leadership of J. P. Fawcner, also from Launceston, arrived in the Yarra, and formed a settlement on the site now occupied by the city of Melbourne. In 1836, Sir Richard Bourke, then Governor of New South Wales, despatched Captain Lonsdale from Sydney, with the title of "Resident Magistrate of the District of Port Phillip," to establish a regular Government, with a party of soldiers as well as the necessary civil officials. In 1837 the Governor of New South Wales arrived from Sydney, and gave the name of Melbourne to the new settlement. Port Phillip was separated from the Mother Colony on the 1st July, 1851, and became an independent Colony under the name of Victoria. The Constitution Act of Victoria was proclaimed on the 23rd November, 1855, and the first representative Parliament was opened on the 21st November, 1856.

South Australia was colonised in the year 1836, by immigrants sent from England, under the auspices of the South Australian Colonisation Company. Until a site for the capital was chosen the immigrants were landed at Kangaroo Island. Colonel Light, who was sent out to select the site for the settlement, arrived in August, 1836, and, after examining Nepean Bay, Port Lincoln, and Encounter Bay, decided upon establishing the capital where Adelaide now stands. Captain Hindmarsh, the first Governor, arrived at the close of the same year, and proclaimed the Colony on the 28th December. At this date, the northern boundary was fixed at the 26th parallel of south latitude, which remained the limit of the Colony till July, 1863, when the boundary was extended northward to the seaboard. The Act granting Responsible Government was proclaimed on the 24th October, 1856, and the first representative Parliament was opened on the 22nd April, 1857.

In 1831 a settlement was established by the Imperial Government at Port Essington, under Sir Gordon Bremer. It was principally used as a military post, and as a harbour of refuge for distressed vessels, but after an occupation of nineteen years it was abandoned. In 1862, Mr. John M'Douall Stuart, a South Australian explorer, succeeded in crossing the continent from Adelaide to Adam Bay on the north coast. He represented the country as suitable for settlement, and application was accordingly made to the Imperial Government for permission to annex the whole of the territory lying between the 26° of south latitude and the seaboard, and the meridians of 129° and 138° east longitude. This tract of territory was formally granted to South Australia in July, 1863, and is now known as the Northern Territory of South Australia. In 1864 the first colonising expedition to the Northern Territory was despatched from Adelaide; a settlement was established at Escape Cliffs, Adam Bay, but the locality being found unsuitable, the colonists, in 1870, removed to Port Darwin, which has since remained the official centre. The administration of the territory is under the control of a Government Resident, who is directly responsible to the authorities of South Australia.

The first attempt at colonisation in New Zealand was made in 1825, by an expedition under the command of Captain Herd, who bought two islands in the Hauraki Gulf, and a strip of land at Hokianga. The attempt failed, owing to the savage character of the natives. Subsequently, a settlement having grown up at what is now called Russell, in the Bay of Islands, in consequence of the frequent visits of whaling-vessels, Mr. Busby, in 1833, was appointed British Resident there.

In 1839 a Company organised in England, styled the "New Zealand Land Company," despatched a preliminary expedition to New Zealand for the purpose of treating with the natives for the purchase of land. They arrived in September of the same year, and established themselves at Port Nicholson, and on January 21st, 1840, the first body of immigrants arrived. On January 29th, Captain Hobson, R.N., arrived at the Bay of Islands, and on the following day the islands were placed under British rule, and became a dependency of New South Wales. On May 21st of the same year the whole of the islands were declared under the sovereignty of Great Britain, and on the 3rd May, 1841, New Zealand was established a separate Colony. Five immigrant-ships arrived in 1840, and settlements were made at Wellington and Auckland. By the treaty of Waitangi, which was signed on February 5th, 1840, the native chiefs ceded the sovereignty of the islands to the British Crown. Disturbances, however, soon occurred between the Maoris and the white settlers, and for about a quarter of a century matters were in a more or less unsettled state. The chief events may be thus summarised:—The Wairau massacres occurred in June, 1843; rising headed by Honi Heki in July, 1844; rebellion of Wiremu Kingi in March, 1860; general war with the Maoris commenced in 1863; serious British

reverses, including the Gate Pah disaster, in 1864; outbreak of the Hau-hau heresy in March, 1865; death of the chief, William Thompson, which practically closed the war, in 1867; rebellion under Te Kooti in November, 1868, which was not finally quelled until July, 1870; submission of the Maori King to the British Government in February, 1875. Constitutional Government was conferred on New Zealand in 1853, and a system by which the local governing power was vested in Provincial Councils, presided over by elective superintendents, continued till November 1876, when it was abolished by an Act of the General Assembly, and Parliament took over the administration of all affairs other than local. The Constitution provides for two Houses of Legislature, as in the other Australasian Colonies. The first session of the General Assembly was opened on the 27th May, 1854, but the members of the Executive were not responsible to Parliament. The first Ministers under a system of Responsible Government were appointed on the 18th April, 1856. In February, 1865, Wellington was established as the seat of Government, and has remained so ever since.

Queensland, like Victoria, is an offshoot of New South Wales. In 1825 the first convict establishment was formed at Eagle Farm, in the Moreton Bay district. The penal settlement came to an end in the year 1842, and the district was proclaimed open to free settlement. From that date to December, 1859, the territory was under the control of the New South Wales Government, the local administration being entrusted to a Government Resident. Its separation from New South Wales took place in 1859, and its Constitution was proclaimed on the 10th December of that year. The first representative Parliament was opened on the 29th May, 1860.