

## SOCIAL CONDITION.

### SAVINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

THE Colonies of Australasia have from very early days been regarded in the light of a working-man's paradise. The high rates of wages which have generally prevailed, and the cheapness with which food could be purchased, have tended to make the position of the wage-earners superior to that occupied by the same class in any other portion of the globe. These advantages have induced in Australasia a greater degree of comfort, if not luxury, amongst a class which, in other parts of the world, has little of comfort and knows nothing of luxury. Although a high standard of living is not conducive to thrift, the progress of saving has gone on with great rapidity, notwithstanding the periodic occurrence of seasons of depression, such as that from which Australasia has suffered during the last year or two.

Some idea, both of the celerity and extent of this accumulation, may be gathered from the increase of deposits in the Banks carrying on business in the Colonies, and tables fully illustrating this branch of the subject will be found in this volume in the chapter relating to "Accumulation," together with a full consideration of the economic aspect of banking.

### INSOLVENCY.

The view presented in the last section, of the accumulation of wealth, would be incomplete without a glance at the other side of the picture. The Bankruptcy laws of the different Colonies are even more dissimilar than the laws on most other questions of importance; they have also been fluctuating, and the subject of many experiments and amendments. This renders any work of comparison difficult and unsatisfactory. The information here given is imperfect in relation to Western Australia, from which no reliable particulars have been obtainable, and also in reference to New Zealand, the returns from which are incomplete. In other respects the figures give a comparative view of insolvencies at three decennial periods and in 1892.

It must be pointed out that some caution should be exercised in dealing with figures representing the liabilities and assets of insolvents, because in the present state of the law there is no means of compelling those who seek the relief of the Courts to give an accurate statement of their affairs. The natural tendency is to understate the liabilities, and to over-estimate the assets, so as to make the estate look as favourable as possible. It is very seldom indeed, when a bankrupt estate is finally wound-up, that the creditors find themselves in so satisfactory a position as the schedule originally filed by the insolvent would lead them to expect.

Colony.	1871.		1881.		1891.		1892.	
	No.	Liabilities.	No.	Liabilities.	No.	Liabilities.	No.	Liabilities.
		£		£		£		£
New South Wales.....	544	325,941	724	379,290	1,189	989,778	1,506	2,033,316
Victoria .....	631	444,117	620	303,892	807	1,824,595	1,125	2,463,936
Queensland.....	73	411,835	153	73,602	300	197,078	326	235,441
South Australia .....	247	246,713	215	123,629	67	33,100	80	36,004
Tasmania.....	25	62,560	33	†13,770	110	117,575	216	134,256
New Zealand .....	737	*	1,406	823,018	605	499,650	507	236,429
	2,257	1,491,166	3,151	1,717,201	3,078	3,661,776	3,760	5,189,352

\* No Return.

† Returns not complete.

From the above table it would appear that the number of insolvencies was greater in New South Wales in 1892 than in any other year under notice, though the amount of liabilities returned was considerably less than the amount shown for Victoria in the same year, the average liability per insolvent in Victoria being £2,190, as against £1,350 for each bankrupt in New South Wales. The serious commercial depression which set in during 1892, no doubt, caused the large excess in the number of insolvents in Australasia, as well as in the estimated amount of liabilities over the figures of 1891. Still it is an important and gratifying feature that, notwithstanding the great increase of population and consequent extension of trade, the number of insolvencies has not increased in the same proportion. In the year 1861 there were 16·1 insolvents to every 10,000 inhabitants, but in 1871 it had dropped to 11·5; and although in 1881 a slight increase to 12·9 took place, yet in 1891 the proportion had fallen to 8 insolvents per 10,000 people. And in 1892, even in spite of the bad times already alluded to, the ratio had only advanced to 9·5 per 10,000 inhabitants.

## NEWSPAPERS AND LETTERS.

There is hardly anything more indicative of the social superiority of a civilized people than the prevalence of correspondence and a large distribution of newspapers. In these respects all the Colonies of Australasia have for many years been remarkable. In proportion to population, it is doubtful whether any country in the world can boast of a larger number or a better class of newspapers than these Colonies. Great advances have been made in this respect since 1871, and the rate of progress, both in number and excellence, has been even more rapid between 1881 and the present time. There is no means of correctly estimating the number of newspapers actually printed and distributed in the Colonies, because the Post Office returns indicate but a small proportion of the actual production. Some idea, however, may be gathered for purposes of comparison with other countries, by noting the distribution of newspapers through the agency of the Post Office. The return for 1892, which comprises all the Colonies, shows that no less than 98,000,000 newspapers passed through the Post Offices, being an average of 25 to every inhabitant. Allowance has been made, as before, for newspapers entered in both the sending and the receiving Colony.

In the same year there were 198,000,000 letters delivered through the post in the seven colonies, being more than 50 letters for every man, woman, and child in those provinces. Allowance has been made in this figure for intercolonial letters counted both in the receiving and despatching colonies. An examination of the statistics of other countries shows that the people of these Colonies stand absolutely at the head of the world's populations in this respect. The inhabitants of Great Britain have nearly but not quite so large a correspondence per head, but the people of no other nation can even approach it.

## PARKS, MUSEUMS, &amp;c.

All the Australasian capitals are liberally supplied with parks and recreation-grounds. In Sydney and the suburbs there are parks, squares, and public gardens comprising an area of 3,761 acres, including 780 acres which form the Centennial Park. Then there is also the picturesque National Park, of 36,320 acres, situated about 16 miles from the centre of the metropolis; and, in addition to this, an area of almost equal extent, in the valley of the Hawkesbury, has been recently reserved for public recreation under the name of Kuringgai Chase. Thus Sydney has two extensive and picturesque domains for the enjoyment of the people at almost equal distances north and south from the city, and both accessible by railway. Melbourne has no less than 5,293 acres of recreation grounds, of which 1,723 acres are within the city

boundaries, 2,788 acres in the suburban municipalities, and 782 acres outside those municipalities. Adelaide is surrounded by a broad belt of park lands, and also contains a number of squares within the city boundaries, covering altogether an area of 2,300 acres. Brisbane, Hobart, Perth, and the chief cities of New Zealand are also well provided for in this respect. In all the Colonies large areas of land have been dedicated as public parks. The Botanic Gardens of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide are included in the areas above referred to. Each of these gardens has a special attraction of its own. They are all well kept, and reflect great credit upon the communities to which they belong.

The various capitals of the Colonies, and also some of the prominent inland towns, are provided with museums for the purposes of instruction as well as recreation, and, in addition, there are in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart art galleries, containing excellent collections of paintings and statuary. All these institutions are open to the public free of charge.

#### PUBLIC CHARITIES—PAUPERISM.

As shown in previous chapters, wealth in Australasia is widely distributed, and the contrast between rich and poor, which seems so peculiar a phase of old-world civilisations, finds no parallel in these southern lands. That there is poverty in the Colonies is undeniable, but no one in Australasia is born to poverty; and that hereditary pauper class which forms so grave a menace to the freedom of many States has, therefore, no existence here.

It is estimated that in the United Kingdom six persons in every hundred possess property to the amount of £100; whereas in the Colonies the proportion is not less than 12·3 per cent. This bare statement shows the vast difference in the conditions of life in Australasia and in the richest country of Europe. This question, however, will be found debated at greater length in the chapter on "Private Wealth" in this volume. No poor rate is levied in the Colonies, nor is such needed; for although it may happen that from time to time the assistance of the State is claimed by, and granted to, able-bodied men who are unable to find employment, that assistance takes the form of wages paid for work specially provided by the State to meet an abnormal condition of the labour market.

The chief efforts of the authorities, as regards charity, are directed towards the rescue of the young from criminal companionship and temptation to crime, the support of the aged and infirm, the care of the imbecile or insane, and the subsidising of private charity for the cure of the sick and injured, and the amelioration of want.

Even where the Government grants aid for philanthropic purposes, the management of the institutions supervising the expenditure is in

private hands; and in addition to State-aided institutions there are numerous private charities, whose efforts for the relief of those whom penury, sickness, or misfortune has afflicted are beyond all praise.

The rescue of the young from crime is attempted in two ways—first, by means of Orphanages, Industrial Schools, and Reformatories, which take care of children who have been abandoned by their natural guardians, or who are likely, from the poverty or incapacity of their parents, to be so neglected as to render them liable to lapse into crime; and secondly, by sequestering children who have already committed crime, or whose parents or guardians find themselves unable to control them.

It will be noticed that the number of deaths from accident in the Australasian Colonies is very great. This arises from the peculiar nature of the occupations in which a large proportion of the adult male population is employed. Although a century has elapsed since settlement commenced in Australasia, its resources are by no means developed, and very many men are at work far away from the home comforts of everyday life, and from home attendance in case of sickness or injury. Hospitals are therefore absolutely essential under the conditions of life in the country districts of the Colonies, and they are accordingly found in every important country town.

The following table shows the total expenditure and the number of persons admitted to the hospitals during the year 1892, as far as information can be obtained. The figures for South Australia refer to the Adelaide Hospital only :—

Colony.	No. of persons admitted during the year.	Expenditure.
		£
New South Wales .....	17,859	137,238
Victoria .....	16,868	153,109
Queensland .....	11,512	87,742
South Australia .....	2,251	14,012
Western Australia .....	791	11,706
Tasmania .....	2,152	17,715
New Zealand .....	7,587	77,463

All the Colonies possess institutions for the care of the insane, which are under Government control. The treatment meted out to the inmates is that dictated by the greatest humanity, and the hospitals are fitted with all the conveniences and appliances which modern science points out as most calculated to mitigate or remove the affliction from which these unfortunate people suffer.

The following table shows the number of insane patients remaining on 31st December, and expenditure for the year 1892 as far as can be ascertained :—

Colony.	No. of Patients.	Expenditure.
		£
New South Wales .....	3,312	102,520
Victoria .....	3,954	104,795
Queensland .....	1,253	33,000
South Australia .....	822	24,248
Western Australia .....	135	1,215
Tasmania .....	357	14,456
New Zealand .....	1,917	37,717
Australasia .....	11,750	317,951

The amounts expended on Destitute Asylums and Benevolent Societies cannot be separated from other items of expenditure in some of the Colonies. As far as they can be ascertained they are given in the following table, together with the number of inmates of the various asylums at the end of 1892, with the exception of Victoria, for which province the returns are made out to the 30th June of that year :—

Colony.	No. of Inmates.	Expenditure.
		£
New South Wales .....	5,757	144,196
Victoria .....	3,308	66,661
Queensland .....	1,881	40,753
South Australia .....	1,320	29,437
Western Australia .....	186	8,450
Tasmania .....	732	11,546
New Zealand .....	847	76,493
Australasia .....	14,031	377,536

A liberal amount of out-door relief is given in all the Australasian Colonies, the expenditure on which is included in the amounts given for Destitute Asylums and Benevolent Societies. The expenditure of the Governments of the Australasian Colonies in connection with all forms of relief and in aid of hospitals and other charitable institutions, so far as shown by the imperfect returns, amounted in 1892 to about £600,000 ; adding to this the amount of private subscriptions, &c., the poor and the unfortunate have benefited during the year to the extent of over £1,000,000. This sum, though not excessive in proportion to the population, may yet appear large in view of the general wealth of the Colonies, which should preclude the necessity of so many seeking assistance ; and there is the risk that the charitable institutions may encourage the growth of the pauper element, for while free quarters and free food are so accessible those who are disinclined to work are tempted to live at the public expense.

## LAW AND CRIME.

Proceedings against a person accused of an offence may be initiated, by the laws of all the provinces, either by formal arrest or by summons. Serious offences are not often dealt with by process of summons, though on the contrary, in some of the colonies, it is not unusual even in trivial cases for the offender to be arrested. These circumstances should be taken into consideration when dealing with apprehensions by the police, which are unusually numerous in some of the Australasian Colonies. It is, however, not easy to make a comparison of the practice of the several colonies in this respect, inasmuch as the records, except in the case of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, merely show the total number of cases that come before the Magistrates' Courts, without distinguishing the proceedings arising from summons from those wherein the person charged was arrested by the police. Another circumstance which operates against a clear comparison of the criminal condition of the different colonies is the fact that there are considerable divergences in the criminal codes, as well as in the classification of offences; besides which the laws are administered with greater strictness in some of the provinces than in others. In almost all cases the first hearing of a criminal charge takes place before a Magistrate's Court, whether composed of Stipendiaries or of unpaid local Justices of the Peace. These Courts have power of jurisdiction as regards minor cases; but in reference to the more serious charges, should a *prima facie* case be made out, they can commit the accused person to take his trial before a higher Court. The following statement shows the number of cases dealt with in the Magistrates' Courts of the several colonies in the year 1892, classified as far as the nature of the returns furnished will permit:—

Colony.	Offenders against —			Total.
	The Person.	Property.	Good Order, &c.	
New South Wales .....	7,256	3,508	61,985	77,749
Victoria .....	2,238	4,646	26,399	33,283
Queensland .....	2,307	2,134	13,094	17,535
South Australia .....	92	529	7,260	7,881
Western Australia .....	478	808	4,228	5,574
Tasmania .....	460	803	5,015	6,278
New Zealand .....	1,551	2,386	14,080	18,017
Australasia .....	14,382	19,814	132,121	166,317

There were, therefore, 166,317 cases altogether dealt with by the Magistrates, in 43,334 of which the persons concerned were discharged, either as guiltless or because sufficient evidence to establish their guilt was not forthcoming; 122,983 were summarily convicted, and condemned either to fine or imprisonment; while 3,781 were committed to

take their trial before a jury. These last-mentioned cases are included principally among the offences enumerated in the first two columns, which comprise what may be properly called crime, such as murder, manslaughter, offences against females, assaults, larceny, burglary, horse and cattle stealing, arson, forgery and other offences against the currency, conspiracy, &c. The remaining column relates to drunkenness and its concomitant disorderly conduct and foul language, and to breaches of municipal and other by-laws, and of various Acts of Parliament involving good order more or less. The number of serious charges dealt with by Magistrates' Courts in each province is shown in the following table, together with the number of cases in which the accused was committed for trial by a higher Court. The proportion per cent. of serious charges to the mean population is also given :—

Colony.	Serious Charges dealt with.	Committals for Trial.	Percentage of Serious Charges to Mean Population.
New South Wales .....	12,174	1,411	1·0
Victoria .....	6,348	1,201	0·5
Queensland .....	4,441	459	1·1
South Australia .....	551	153	0·2
Western Australia .....	1,279	93	2·3
Tasmania .....	1,343	107	0·9
New Zealand .....	3,937	366	0·6
Australasia .....	30,073	3,781	0·8

The number of convictions by Magistrates during 1892 is set forth in the following table. It will be observed that as regards South Australia the totals only are given, as the returns published by that colony do not show the classification of the offences for which summary punishments were inflicted. The table also gives the proportion borne by the numbers convicted to the total population of each colony and of Australasia :—

Colony.	Offences against—			Total.	Percentage of Summary Convictions to Population.
	The Person.	Property.	Good Order, &c.		
New South Wales.....	3,264	4,125	48,961	56,350	4·9
Victoria .....	1,475	2,426	17,723	21,624	1·9
Queensland.....	1,291	1,113	11,259	13,663	3·3
South Australia.....	.....	.....	.....	6,884	2·1
Western Australia .....	251	556	2,770	3,577	6·4
Tasmania .....	220	508	4,094	4,822	3·2
New Zealand .....	806	1,352	10,124	12,282	1·9
Australasia.....	.....	.....	.....	119,202	3·0



More than half the cases heard in the Magistrates' Courts, and nearly half the summary convictions, are for drunkenness. The figures for each province, except Western Australia, for the year 1892, are given in the following statement, which also gives the number of arrests and convictions for this offence to every hundred of the population. The records of Western Australia do not distinguish the arrests and convictions for drunkenness from those for other offences against good order generally. The work of the police in arresting drunken persons seems to be about the same in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, but while convictions seem to be the lot of the person arrested in the two colonies first named, in Victoria so rigid a practice does not obtain, for 37 out of every 100 arrested escape without being punished by the Bench, many probably preferring to estreat a small amount of bail rather than face exposure in the Court :—

Colony.	Charges of Drunkenness.	Summary Convictions.	Percentage to Population.	
			Of Apprehensions.	Of Convictions.
New South Wales .....	20,665	18,553	1·7	1·6
Victoria .....	15,891	10,008	1·4	0·9
Queensland .....	4,916	4,810	1·2	1·2
South Australia .....	2,714	2,587	0·8	0·8
Tasmania .....	921	892	0·6	0·6
New Zealand .....	5,348	5,157	0·8	0·8
Australasia* .....	50,455	42,007	1·3	1·1

\* Western Australia not included.

A return showing only the number of arrests for drunkenness is not a safe index as to the abuse of alcoholic liquors, for a great deal depends on the state of the law and the manner in which it is administered, and it is evident that the maintenance of the law intended to preserve public decency will always be less strict in sparsely-settled country districts than in larger centres of population where the police are comparatively more numerous, if not in proportion to the population, at least in proportion to the area they have under their supervision. The quantity of intoxicants consumed per head is perhaps a safer index to the habits of communities living under like conditions; but comparisons so based should not be pushed to extremes, for, as it has often been pointed out, the larger part of the alcohol which enters into consumption is that consumed by the population who are not drunkards. Information as to the quantity of intoxicants used per inhabitant in each province during

1892 is given below, wines and beers being reduced to their equivalent of proof spirit :—

Colony.	Proof Gallons of Alcohol per head of population.
New South Wales .....	2·67
Victoria .....	3·24
Queensland .....	2·46
South Australia .....	2·53
Western Australia .....	3·68
Tasmania .....	2·00
New Zealand .....	1·77
Australasia .....	2·65

The consumption of various classes of intoxicants in the several colonies is shown in the chapter on "Food Supply and Cost of Living."

The following table shows the number of police, the number of inhabitants to each police constable, and the average area which each constable had under his supervision during the year 1892 ; it is obvious that in nearly every colony the police force requires strengthening :—

Colony.	Number of Police.			Number of Inhabitants to each Police Constable.			Area under supervision of each Police Constable in Country Districts.
	Metro-politan Area.	Country Districts.	Whole Colony.	Metro-politan Area.	Country Districts.	Whole Colony.	
New South Wales .....	629	1,127	1,756	645	683	673	Square miles 276
Victoria .....	748	740	1,488	644	929	803	118
Queensland .....	200	711	911	470	444	456	940
South Australia .....	173	266	439	788	717	767	3,396
Western Australia .....	46	219	265	230	256	211	4,840
Tasmania .....	49	254	303	703	464	504	103
New Zealand .....	40	441	481	884	1,372	1,135	237

The record of cases heard before a Court of Magistrates cannot be regarded as altogether a trustworthy indication of the social progress of Australasia, because it includes many kinds of offences which cannot fairly be classed as criminal, and the number of these has a tendency to increase with the increase of local enactments. The record of committals for trial for the more serious offences coming before the Courts, taken in conjunction with the convictions for crime in the Superior Courts, may be regarded as much more conclusive on the question of the progress of society or the reverse. In some respects even this evidence is misleading, for in the less populous provinces there

are no Courts intermediary between the Magistrates and the Supreme Courts, so that many offences which, in New South Wales and Victoria for example, are tried by a jury are in some of the other provinces dealt with by the Magistrates.

The following table shows the proportion of committals by Magistrates, and of convictions in the Superior Courts of all the Colonies, per 1,000 of the population for the last four decennial census periods and for 1892. It will be seen that the committals have decreased from 2·2 in 1861 to 1·0 in 1892, and the convictions by jury during the same period have decreased from 1·3 to 0·5, or about one-third :—

Year.	Per 1,000 of Population.	
	Committals.	Convictions in Superior Courts.
1861 .....	2·2	1·3
1871 .....	1·4	0·8
1881 .....	1·2	0·7
1891 .....	1·1	0·6
1892 .....	1·0	0·5

In noting these facts and comparing results with that obtained in Great Britain during the same period, it must not be forgotten that some of the provinces of Australasia have been compelled gradually to reform a portion of their original population, and that in the case of colonies such as Victoria and Queensland, not originally peopled in any degree by convicts, the attractions of the gold-fields have drawn within their borders a population by no means free from criminal instincts and antecedents. Viewed in this light, the steady progress made cannot but be regarded as exceedingly satisfactory, and the expectation may be not unreasonably entertained that the same improvement will be continued until the ratio of crime to population will compare favourably with that of any part of the world.

It is a peculiar circumstance that, though the people of Australasia are of one blood, and the laws against crime are practically the same in each colony, some of the colonies show a far greater ratio of conviction for serious crime than do the others. A crude theory has been put forward that this pre-eminence in crime is due to a convict taint in the colonies possessing a comparatively high record. The incorrectness of this presumption will be manifest, since Tasmania—a province now in one of the most favourable positions in regard to serious crime—is the one which suffered most from the transportation system. Whatever be the explanation, the fact, however, remains that New South Wales and Western Australia have a higher rate of criminal convictions than the other provinces, and that South Australia shows a marked contrast in its freedom from serious crime. The following

table shows the convictions in the Superior Courts of the different colonies, at decennial periods, from 1861 to 1891, and also those for 1892 :—

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1892.
New South Wales .....	437	628	1,066	964	896
Victoria .....	846	511	332	729	759
Queensland .....	24	91	92	232	203
South Australia .....	62	91	213	90	90
Western Australia .....	35	65	61	44	83
Tasmania .....	127	74	51	63	43
New Zealand .....	100	162	270	276	180
Australasia .....	1,631	1,622	2,085	2,398	2,254

The committals by magistrates, and the convictions in the Superior Courts of each province per 1,000 of population during 1892, were as follows :—

Colony.	Per 1,000 of Population.	
	Committals.	Convictions.
New South Wales .....	1·2	0·8
Victoria .....	1·0	0·7
Queensland .....	1·1	0·5
South Australia .....	0·5	0·3
Western Australia .....	1·7	1·5
Tasmania .....	0·7	0·3
New Zealand .....	0·6	0·3
Australasia .....	1·0	0·5

A classification of the offences for which the convictions in Superior Courts in 1892 took place is given in the subjoined table :—

Colony.	Offences against			Total.
	The Person.	Property.	Good Order, &c.	
New South Wales .....	213	588	95	896
Victoria .....	100	610	49	759
Queensland .....	50	137	16	203
South Australia .....	4	60	26	90
Western Australia .....	25	52	6	83
Tasmania .....	11	1	31	43
New Zealand .....	29	127	24	180
Australasia .....	432	1,575	247	2,254

The large number of convictions in New South Wales may perhaps be accounted for to some extent by a more rigorous administration of the law than obtains in other provinces; partly, also, to the fact of there being no law to prevent the influx of criminals, such as exists, and is strictly enforced, in some of the other Colonies. New South Wales is in fact the happy hunting ground for the criminals of all the Colonies.

The punishment of death is very seldom resorted to except in cases of murder, though formerly such was not the case. Thus, in 1861, the executions in the whole of the Colonies amounted to 20; they had fallen to 8 in 1871, to 5 in 1881, and to 2 in 1890. In 1891, however, the number mounted up to 14, of which 7 were in Victoria, and 3 in New South Wales. In South Australia the extreme penalty has been most sparingly inflicted, there having been only 9 in the 22 years which closed with 1892. The following table shows the number of executions in each province in each decade of the 50 years which ended with 1890, also those which took place in 1891 and 1892. Queensland was incorporated with New South Wales until the end of 1859, though Victoria became a separate Colony in 1851. It will be noticed that the returns are defective so far as Western Australia is concerned:—

Colony.	1841-50.	1851-60.	1861-70.	1871-80.	1881-90.	1891.	1892.
New South Wales..	68	{ 38	34	27	23	3	1
Queensland .....		47	14	18	15	1	4
Victoria .....		7	41	19	13	7	1
South Australia ..		.....	12	6	2	1	...
Western Australia .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	4
Tasmania .....	83	32	15	3	5	1	...
New Zealand .....	.....	.....	.....	12	8	.....	...
Total.....	151	124	116	85	66	14	10

The returns relating to the prisons of the Colonies are in some cases very incomplete. The prisoners in confinement at any specified time may be divided into those who have been tried and sentenced, those who are awaiting their trial, and debtors. The returns of five of the Colonies allow of this distinction being made. The number and classification of prisoners in confinement on 31st December, 1892, were as follows:—

Colony.	Tried and Sentenced.	Awaiting Trial.	Debtors.	Total.
New South Wales .....	2,484	129	9	2,622
Victoria .....	1,641	84	.....	1,725
Queensland .....	560	30	2	592
South Australia .....	249	7	.....	256
New Zealand .....	433	38	2	473
Total .....	5,367	288	13	5,668

The returns of Tasmania give the total number of prisoners in confinement on 31st December, 1892, as 172, while Western Australia records a daily average of 349. Taking this figure just mentioned to be correct for 31st December, there would have been a prison population for Australasia of 6,189, or about 1·6 in every 1,000 of the population.

### SUICIDES.

Suicides would unfortunately appear to be increasing in number, as well as in proportion to population. The following table indicates a portion of the past history and present position of the Colonies in this respect :—

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1892.	Average of 10 years. 1883-1892.
New South Wales .....	45	30	83	119	127	105
Victoria .....	64	90	102	119	134	117
Queensland .....	*	8	30	73	73	56
South Australia .....	13	11	34	31	27	30
Western Australia .....	1	*	4	6	11	5
Tasmania .....	7	4	6	9	9	8
New Zealand.....	*	*	42	56	59	55
Total .....	130	143	301	413	440	376
Per 100,000 of population .....	13·0	8·4	10·9	10·6	11·2	9·5

\* Information not available.

Compared with the total number of deaths, suicides in the Australasian colonies during the last twenty years (1873-92) show the following proportion per 100,000 :—

Colony.	Per 100,000 Deaths.	Per 100,000 Inhabitants.
New South Wales .....	666	9·9
Victoria .....	745	11·6
Queensland .....	899	14·9
South Australia .....	648	9·0
Western Australia .....	579	9·4
Tasmania .....	369	5·8
New Zealand .....	817	8·9
Australasia .....	720	10·5

Tasmania, therefore, stands in a more favourable position than any of the other Colonies, and is the only Colony in which the rate is less than in the United Kingdom, where deaths by suicides average only 7 per 100,000 of population. Compared with the rates of some European countries that of Australasia is however, small, for during the years 1885-87 there were no less than 13·0 suicides in Belgium, 15·9 in Austria, 20·5 in France, and 20·8 in Germany per 100,000 inhabitants.

## ILLEGITIMACY.

The following figures show the number of births of illegitimate children and the total births for the years 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1892, respectively :—

	1871.		1881.		1891.		1892.	
	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.	Illegiti- mates.	Total Births.
New South Wales...	782	20,143	1,263	28,993	2,115	39,458	2,289	40,041
Victoria .....	747	27,382	1,382	27,145	2,064	38,505	2,116	37,831
Queensland .....	156	5,205	345	8,220	684	14,715	752	14,903
South Australia .....	*	7,082	*	10,708	315	10,737	303	10,544
Western Australia...	*	760	*	1,005	*	1,786	109	1,848
Tasmania.....	*	3,053	*	3,918	185	4,971	236	4,965
New Zealand .....	*	10,592	534	18,732	638	18,273	593	17,876
	1,685	74,217	3,524	98,721	6,001	128,445	6,398	128,008
Per cent. of Births...	3·19	.....	4·24	.....	4·74	.....	5·0	.....

\* Information not available.

Illegitimacy also is increasing upon the whole in Australasia, as shown by the table just given. The ratio, indeed, compared with the total births is still rather better than in England; but while the percentage of illegitimate births has steadily declined during the last fifty years in England, it has advanced in Australasia during the period included in the table. The following are the average annual percentages of illegitimate births to total births, calculated over a series of years for each of the Colonies and the United Kingdom :—

	Illegitimate Births per cent.
New South Wales.....	4·4
Victoria .....	4·5
Queensland.....	4·3
South Australia.....	2·2
Western Australia .....	4·2
Tasmania.....	4·2
New Zealand .....	2·7
England .....	5·4
Ireland .....	2·3
Scotland .....	9·3

## DIVORCE.

The question of divorce, which has assumed considerable importance owing to recent legislation on the subject, is one of much interest, the more so because for some years past all the Colonies of Australasia have

offered large facilities for divorce in all cases coming within the law. The prevailing opinion has been that such facilities were calculated to increase divorce to an extent that would prove hurtful to public morals. So far as the experience of these colonies goes, at present the fear would seem to be groundless, but sufficient time has not yet elapsed to enable any definite opinion to be hazarded.

In New South Wales the chief grounds on which divorce was granted, under the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1873, were adultery since marriage on the part of the wife, and adultery with cruelty on the part of the husband. A measure, however, passed through both Houses of the Legislature, and came into force during 1892, which in the main assimilates the law to that of Victoria, where in addition to the grounds mentioned above divorces may be granted on both sides for desertion for over three years, habitual drunkenness, habitual cruelty and neglect, imprisonment for over three years and still in prison on commuted capital sentence, or under penal servitude for seven years, conviction within one year previously of attempt to murder, or assault with intent to commit grievous bodily harm, assault or cruel beating, and, in the case of the husband, five years frequent convictions for crime, and habitually leaving wife without support. In the colonies of Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, divorces are granted principally for adultery on the part of the wife, and adultery coupled with desertion for over two years on the part of the husband.

The following table shows the number of decrees for dissolution of marriage, and for judicial separation granted in each Colony in quinquennial periods since 1867, as far as it is possible to procure the information :—

Colony.	1867-70.		1871-75.		1876-80.		1881-85.		1886-90.		1891-92.	
	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.
New South Wales .....	...	...	10	...	81	2	98	13	171	29	121	23
Victoria .....	31	8	33	6	41	2	74	8	124	9	190	1
Queensland .....	...	...	4	1	14	...	5	2	26	3	11	1
South Australia .....	7	1	22	3	35	2	31	10	23	2	12	...
Western Australia .....	6	2	...	...	1	1	5	...	8	...	5	...
Tasmania .....	1	1	9	...	9	...	9	...	15	2	6	1
New Zealand .....	* ..	* ..	* ..	* ..	* ..	* ..	* ..	* ..	110	5	38	4
Australasia .....	45	12	78	10	181	7	222	33	477	50	383	30

\* Information not available.



Divorce was legalised in New South Wales in 1873, and in Queensland in 1870, so that no figures appear for those colonies in the first quinquennial period. The totals for all except the last two periods are exclusive of New Zealand.

Sufficient data are not to hand to admit of a comparison of divorces and marriages, except on the basis of the number of each in any year. Taking the figures in the foregoing table, the following shows the number of divorces in each province per 10,000 marriages :—

Colony.	1867-70.	1871-75.	1876-80.	1881-85.	1886-90.	1891-92.
New South Wales .....	...	+11.2	32.0	31.1	51.7	85.7
Victoria .....	20.9	16.0	16.9	24.4	31.1	115.7
Queensland .....	...	8.0	18.7	6.0	19.0	21.1
South Australia .....	15.6	33.5	34.6	33.1	24.3	27.0
Western Australia .....	117.8	...	20.5	44.8	53.5	60.5
Tasmania .....	7.8	27.4	22.0	18.0	35.4	35.3
New Zealand .....	*...	*...	*...	*...	63.5	53.8

\* Information not available. † 1874 and 1875 only.

In the subjoined table will be found the figures for each of the years 1886-92, from which it will be seen that, taking the colonies as a whole, divorce is decidedly increasing :—

Colony.	1886.		1887.		1888.		1889.		1890.		1891.		1892.	
	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.	Divorces.	Judicial Separation.
New South Wales .....	32	4	25	3	28	5	44	8	42	9	50	17	71	6
Victoria .....	16	..	18	5	28	1	22	3	40	..	99	..	91	1
Queensland .....	1	..	..	1	6	..	11	..	8	2	5	1	6	..
South Australia .....	10	1	3	1	2	..	6	..	2	..	5	..	7	..
Western Australia .....	2	..	..	..	2	..	1	..	3	..	4	..	1	..
Tasmania .....	6	1	..	..	4	..	3	1	2	..	3	..	3	1
New Zealand .....	24	..	16	1	32	..	17	1	21	3	20	3	18	1
Australasia .....	91	6	62	11	102	6	104	13	118	14	186	21	197	9
Totals .....	97		73		108		117		132		207		206	
Number of marriages .....	25,079		25,067		27,000		26,810		27,525		27,663		26,051	
Divorces and separations per 10,000 marriages .....	38.7		29.1		40.0		43.6		48.0		74.8		79.1	

The proportion of divorces to 10,000 marriages is much higher in the colonies than in the United Kingdom ; but, at the same time, very much lower than in most of the other European countries or the United States, as will be seen by the following statement :—

Country.	Divorces per 10,000 Marriages.	Country.	Divorces per 10,000 Marriages.
Ireland .....	2	Hungary .....	64
Austria .....	10	Belgium .....	69
Canada .....	12	Sweden .....	73
United Kingdom .....	18	Holland .....	91
England .....	19	Roumania.....	106
Russia .....	22	France .....	127
Italy.....	24	Germany .....	152
Scotland .....	29	Denmark .....	406
Norway .....	30	United States .....	444
Poland .....	55	Switzerland .....	468

### INSANITY.

The number of insane persons under official cognizance throughout Australasia on the 31st December, 1892, was 11,750. This represents 2·9 per 1,000 of the population. The rates in the United Kingdom for the last recorded period were—England, 3·0; Scotland, 3·1; and Ireland, 3·5. The amount of insanity in Australasia and in England, compared with their respective populations, is, therefore, about the same, though there appears to be a tendency in the latter country for the rate to increase. The ratios, both in Scotland and Ireland, are higher than in the rest of Great Britain or in Australasia. The following table shows the proportion of lunacy in each of the Colonies at the end of 1892, from which it will appear that the greatest proportion is to be found in Victoria, and the smallest in Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia :—

	Insane persons per 1,000 of population.
New South Wales .....	2·7
Victoria .....	3·4
Queensland .....	3·0
South Australia .....	2·4
Western Australia.....	2·3
Tasmania .....	2·3
New Zealand .....	3·0
Australasia .....	2·9

The following figures are given by Mulhall for a series of years, in most cases from 1884 to 1888; they show the number of insane per 1,000 inhabitants in various countries :—

Country.	Number of Insane.	Country.	Number of Insane.
Ireland .....	3·7	Austria .....	2·0
United States .....	3·3	Canada .....	1·8
England .....	3·2	Italy .....	1·7
Scotland .....	3·2	Belgium and Holland.....	1·2
Scandinavia .....	2·9	Russia .....	1·1
France .....	2·5	Switzerland .....	1·1
Germany.....	2·4	Spain and Portugal.....	0·7