

cluded; whereas, under the first-named system, the manure having been carried out previously to its commencement, and properly protected in heaps, the only interruption to its progress will be **the** work of giving the manure to the plants when they are sufficiently forward to receive the bank, and that in weather unsuited to the manufacture of sugar,-the bank of course being given by the plough. The business of hoeing and **moulding** the ratoons I have no doubt will be accomplished by the compound implement which I have **endeavoured** to describe, without interfering with the progress of crop.

I have thus endeavoured to show, that “the most economical and profitable application of **labour** in the cultivation of the sugar cane” *is to be found in the practice of a better system of agriculture than that which generally prevails.* **My** remarks are founded on genuine experience, successful practice, and much reflection; and though they may not be applicable to every part of the island, -something **useful** by analogy may be derived from them even in those situations to which their practice will not altogether apply.

Science, which has done so much for agriculture during the last twenty years in Great Britain, has certainly not made such rapid strides for its advancement in this **country**, and the reason, I apprehend, has been the want of a clear knowledge of the practice in general use; for, without this knowledge, it **cannot** be known wherein amendment is most required.

It is to be hoped the candid reader will not peruse this, my first **effort** at **essay** writing, with too critical an eye; -that it is very imperfect I am too sensible, and I fear I may have failed to make my meaning perfectly intelligible; in my desire to be understood, I have probably been unnecessarily prolix: still I trust that **something** may be learnt from it by those who are but commencing their career as planters, and they form **at** the present **time** a very numerous body. Even those who have the benefit of experience, I trust, may **find** something as to the general economy of estates in these few pages, which will requite them for the time spent in their perusal.



CUTTING THE SUGAR CANE.

NOTES OF A RESIDENCE IN VAN DIEMAN'S LAND,
IN 1842-43 ;

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF COLONIAL DISCIPLINE AND
EMPLOYMENT, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS EFFICIENT IMPROVEMENT.

BY A LATE COLONIAL POLICE MAGISTRATE.

CAPTAIN BELL, of the Corsair steamer, in which vessel I had engaged a passage **from** Melbourne to Launceston, called **on me to say that he** should depart early the next morning, and that it was desirable that such of the passengers as conveniently could do so, should go on board that afternoon, where at five o'clock they would have dinner ready for them. I soon got my light baggage together, called on such of my fellow-voyagers as were in town, and wished them a good morning-I hate taking a formal leave, and at three o'clock **I** found myself on board the small steamer that **runs** down the river with passengers and luggage from Melbourne to the various ships lying off Williamston. In an hour and a half we were on board the Corsair, where our **first concern** was to choose a sleeping berth, and then for dinner "with what **appetite** we may;" others of the passengers were hourly arriving, and it was past midnight before it was found that we were all on board. The next morning by daybreak we were under weigh. We had very fine weather, and a delightful sail up the harbour to the heads, which we got through with the tide against **us**; whilst two or three sailing vessels were obliged to bring up, thus most unequivocally showing the superiority of a steamer to sailing vessels for that navigation.

We **had a** capital passage across **Bass's** Straits to Launceston, and in twenty-four hours after leaving Williamston we were off Georgeton on the Tamar, where we were boarded by an officer of the Customs, and being found "all right," were soon again breasting an ebb tide to Launceston, which is about forty miles up the river. The country on both banks of the river is a great deal cleared, and as it was just after harvest, we were highly gratified by seeing **the** stack-yards of the settlers well garnished. In one homestead we counted fifteen large ricks **of** what appeared principally to be wheat, and from the **colour** and brightness of the straw it must, if the grain were answerable to it, have been indeed a golden harvest.

The flats or marshes, as they are usually called, are, in some instances, of a tolerable extent ; and the hills crowned with their original

timber, occasionally came down to the edge of the river, giving a great and pleasing variety to the scenery. On our passage up, I for the first time saw great numbers of the black swan, a bird so long supposed to have had only a fabulous **existence**, and one of the gentlemen on board shot one, but we could not stop to secure it.

The ebb tide was so strong against us and retarded us so much, that it was towards evening before we arrived near Launceston, when in consequence of its being low tide, which prevented a vessel of our draught of water from getting over a small bar in the river, that ought and could be easily removed, we were obliged to bring up some distance below the town. It was nearly dark when I got on shore with my luggage, and then I had to wend my way to the inn to which I had been recommended, and where I soon found I could get comfortable accommodation.

I then sought out the coach-office, and learnt that the coach started next morning at **five** o'clock for Hobarton. -I would willingly have staid two or three days at Launceston, but as the great **Newtown** races were to come off the next week, I found that unless I **left** next morning, I should be detained a week as the coach was booked full the two journeys **after**, and as that was longer than I had a fancy to, I put up with the inconvenience and booked myself for next morning, when we started pretty punctually, full inside and out, with rather more luggage on the roof than *is* now usual in England : a capital team of bright bays well matched, a telegraph coach rather the worse for wear, and a coachman that soon satisfied us that he had been used to "handling the ribbons." From Launceston to **Hobarton** is about one hundred and twenty miles ; the road has been a long time in hand, and is about **two-thirds** completed in a very fair manner ; the other parts occurring at intervals are still in their natural state, and as bad as need be. We were **frequently** obliged to walk both up and down the hills, and as the coach was rather top-heavy, I consider it lucky that we got through our journey without any serious accident. Several gangs of convicts were at work on the road, and in about a year or two they expect it will be completed throughout as it ought to have been long ago, and then the coach should travel through the whole distance in a day, say three times a week each way, and at a much less charge than they now exact,

Long stages are still the go here, and we went with the same horses twenty miles, where we stopped at a good roadside inn to breakfast, which was a most substantial one ; then two other stages, say forty miles, to dinner, where we met the other coach from **Hobarton** ; **I**

cannot say much for the dinner, except that we had plenty of time to eat it in. We then had another twenty miles' stage to run, over to **Spring Hill**, where we were to stop for the night and sleep ; this was a **capital** house, good *tea*, good beds, indeed altogether as good a roadside inn as could be wished for. It was kept by a man who was the proprietor, and who had been formerly a non-commissioned officer of the 40th regiment, from which he had obtained his discharge with a pension on the regiment leaving the colony for India. When we were waiting for the coach next morning, a gentleman who was on his road from Launceston to **Hobarton** for the race-week, and who was with his own carriage, came out of the inn ; if I had not known that "**Charley** Incledon" was dead, I could have fancied it to have been him. I am not very susceptible of being struck by likenesses, but this was the greatest I had ever experienced, and I could not help noticing it to those around me, not one of whom had ever had the pleasure and delight of hearing the still-unequaled "Incledon." We started at six; had another **twenty**-mile stage to breakfast ; air sharp and fine ; appetite capital ; and we all did justice to the **substantials** that were set before us. About another **ten** miles we had to cross the Derwent at Bridgewater, which we did in a punt that the coach drove on to ; it was hauled across by ropes, and we drove off with ease and safety on the opposite side. I should suppose that at some time or other there will be a bridge there ; there seems to be no impediment to **the** erection of one, and it would be a very justifiable outlay in the first instance of Government funds. I subsequently heard that there were parties who were willing to undertake it, and give a good sum for the lease of the tolls ; but such is the jealousy of the governing powers at any offer of improvement made by individuals, that they have even abandoned a project at one time entertained by themselves. Such a suspension **bridge** as is erected over the **river** at Shoreham, in Sussex, would be just **the** thing for them.

On our route we had passed through several of what are called towns, certainly very young ones, but everywhere there were signs of improvement and an increasing population, and as we approached Hobarton, the houses were pretty thickly strewed all the way.

F——, who had been my "compagnon de voyage" to Port **Phillip**, but who had left Melbourne for Launceston in a sailing vessel **some** days before me, was again my fellow-traveller on the coach. We found **Hobarton** very full of company in consequence of the approaching races, and went to several inns where they could not "take us in ;" but at last got very good lodgings at a boarding-house in Campbell=

street, when we found two or three other gentlemen, which made it very agreeable to us.

Whilst waiting in the street with our luggage expecting the return of our valet-de-place, whom we had sent to look for lodgings, I saw a gentleman coming towards us, whom I immediately **recognised** as an old townsman of mine, G. T. W. B. Boyes, Esq. then acting as Colonial Secretary instead of Capt. **Montagu**, who had been just before so unceremoniously dismissed by Sir J. Franklin, the **Lieutenant-Governor**. I accosted him and was most cordially received ; an appointment was made for a meeting at his office the next morning, and an invitation given to dine with him the same day. This I could not help thinking was a most auspicious commencement to my residence, long or short, in this country.

I accordingly waited on him next morning, delivered the **official** letter which I **had** brought from Lord John Russell, the Secretary for the Colonies, and learnt for the first time, that the station I was appointed to was about forty miles from Hobarton, in rather an **unimproved** part of the country, and to which there was for the greater part of the way nothing but a Bush road, and that beset with very **considerable** difficulties from hills, swamps, bogs, &c. &c.

I find the boarding-house, which is kept by a respectable woman, to be very comfortable and the charges moderate ; which, as I shall have to stop here for a month at least, is just as it should be:

The **Newtown** races, which are the most considerable in the island, are to come off next week, and "**a** horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse !" seems to be the very general cry. One stake is as much **as nine** hundred **guineas**, and others are to considerable amounts; indeed, **horse-racing** seems in high feather, and is very generally supported. The Launceston gentlemen, who appear to act together, have sent over eleven horses to contend for the various stakes, and so careful are **they** of them, that they sent water in carts all the way with them, so that they might not **suffer** from any change. .

1st April.4 did not go to the races, as **I** intended to have done ; the buffeting about that I had had, and the great heat of the weather, made it more convenient for me to stay at home. I was disappointed at not having been able to embrace the opportunity of seeing all the "**rank, fashion, and beauty,**" that were, of course, to be found there ; but as I take no particular interest in racing, I did not much regret the loss of that. We had some rain last night, which has cooled the air and made it quite pleasant ; it has also laid the dust, a great deal too much of which is allowed to accumulate in the streets.

I went to-day to the post-office to inquire for letters and newspapers, and introduced myself to Capt. F. C. Smith, the postmaster-general. He is a son of the late William Smith, the personal and political friend of Charles James Fox, who for many years represented Norwich ; and the brother of Mr. B. Smith, one of its present representatives. He is also brother-in-law to my late much-esteemed friend John Bonham Carter, Esq., who for **so** many years was Member for the close and open Borough of Portsmouth.

The steady support that all these gentlemen for so many years gave to liberal principles, ought to have secured **from** a liberal government a much better **appointment** than that held by Capt. Smith ; but the error of that government has been too great a neglect of their true, staunch, and competent friends, and they are now paying the penalty of it. The honest patronage of the government should **be bestowed** upon such fit and proper men as have honourably and consistently supported them ; they are either true to the principles they profess, or 'they are not ; if they mean to carry such measures as they think right, they should bestow their patronage upon those who hold the same opinions with themselves. The Tories always had sense enough to do so, and they were right.

Van **Dieman's** Land has been so often described, that a very few observations from me must suffice. It is situated from 40 to 43 degrees of South latitude, and from **142** to 146 of East longitude, and is supposed to contain about **20,000,000** acres of land, or about as large as Ireland. More than **half** the island has as yet been unexplored ; but sufficient is known to enable it to be said, that it offers as great a variety as can be expected **from** the size. On some of the mountains-and they are pretty **numerous**—the snow lies from three to four months ; whilst **on** the east coast the influence of **frost** is never felt. The quantity of very good land does not appear to be great ; but where it has been properly cleared and brought into cultivation, the crops are excellent in quantity, and of first-rate quality. Four quarters of wheat to the acre (weighing 68 **lbs.** per bushel) we frequently hear **of**, and other grain in proportion. The barley has not the reputation of being as good as the **English**, either for malting or grinding ; but when more attention shall be bestowed on its growth, that inequality will disappear. Oats are very fine, and oat-hay, which seems to be in general use, must, from the condition of the horses and cattle, be very nutritious. Horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs are all of the best sorts, having been reared from stock originally brought from England, 'and which were judiciously selected from the best breeds. The growth. of hops has

been **recently** introduced, and a gentleman at New Norfolk grew in 1841 as many as sold for £300 : they complain greatly of **their imported** hops, and say that in opening the bags or pockets it is too often **found** that the outside only is of a fair sample, but that the centre is either **filled up with** old or those of a very **inferior** quality. The gentlemen in the "Borough" should look to this ; the names and dates on the bags ought to be a true indication of the quality : but after two or three years more it is quite probable that exporters will not be troubled to ship hops either for Van **Dieman's** Land or Sydney, as the success that has attended their first attempts will eventually lead to a much larger cultivation. I do not see why their malt should not be as good as that made at home. Three or four good **maltsters**, who **thoroughly** understood, their business, would soon put all that to rights.

Every species of fruit and vegetables usual in the gardens and orchards of England have not deteriorated in quality ; but, **in** many instances, have very decidedly improved, and the crops are larger, particularly of cherries, plums, apples, and pears, than any **I** have ever been used to. **There** is not much variety of species in the forest trees, but some of them attain to very great dimensions, and are good timber, either for house or ship building ; there is one species of rough **mahogany**, called light wood, which does well for interior work. The trees never shed their foliage, which is of a very dull and disagreeable **appearance** ; they have none of that variety which makes **the** park and forest scenery of England so delightful. The trees generally are not very thick on the ground ; but where they are so, it is always an **indication** of a superior soil, which well repays the additional cost of clearing. When a clearing is to be made, it has been found best at once to pluck up the trees root and branch, by which a larger quantity of the subsoil is brought to the **surface**, and which invariably proves to be of a most valuable character. The hills, wherever there is a good run of water near, are found to be most advantageous for sheep and cattle, feeding large flocks and herds, which are now kept at a very trifling cost, as they pay nothing for running on the Crown lands. Some of the sheep are of the fine-woolled sorts, 'but not in so large a proportion as they ought to be ; and the wool, which is now become a most important article of export, fetches a good price in the English market. A few years ago so little was thought of the wool, that it was usually burnt on the farms for manure, or thrown out in heaps to rot, when a Mr. Hopkins, who was an ironmonger and general dealer in Hobarton, offered to buy any quantity **that** should be brought to him at **three-pence** per pound, to be taken out in such goods as he dealt in ; in a very

short time he had made a good fortune at it, when others were induced to **follow** his example, and as the returns of prices from England ruled higher and higher, until at one time it fetched as much as half-a-crown the pound, the trade increased, and it is now supposed that the returns for wool alone amount to from ~150,000 to £200,000 per annum.

If ever a man deserved a statue in bronze “John Hopkins” does, and an eligible site ought to be selected at **Hobarton** on which to erect it, and a public subscription entered into to defray the cost. He has been to them as much as ever Bishop Blaze was to the English flock-masters, and ought never to be forgotten. “John Hopkins” has built the best stone-house in **Hobarton**; I cannot say I admire the situation of it-but there is no disputing about taste: if it ever should be for sale, it will never **realise** half its cost; but he, no doubt, built it for his own convenience; and, like other great men, thought he had “a **right** to do what he liked with his own.”

It is found by experience that the oak, **ash**, elm, beech, walnut, **chestnut**, birch, and many other timber trees usual in England, thrive well in Van **Dieman's** Land, and extensive plantations as well as smaller patches have been made, which in due time must add considerably to the value of estates, and the acorn and **beech** mast will make a very pretty picking for the pigs when they shall be turned out **for** an autumn run **after** an amusement in the wheat ashes. Generally there are neither pheasants, partridges, nor hares; but they can be easily introduced, and where they have been are found to answer. There are **plenty of quail**, swans, wood pigeons, wild duck, widgeon, and teal, **which**, particularly **the ducks**, are a most delicious *bonne-bouche*. There are many varieties of birds of a beautiful plumage, but not a songster amongst them: the **parrots** are very handsome, **particularly** the roselle, and the rare **black** cockatoos, which are **magnificent**. Fish are very scarce: they have a small flounder, and the trumpeter, which is **thought** a great deal of; and the eels are excellent. No salmon, turbot, cod, whiting, soles, mackerel, crabs, or lobsters. They have a very good sort of crayfish, and their oysters are good, but, for want of proper regulations for the **take and sale** of them, they are fast diminishing in quantity, and the quality is not thought **so highly** of as it used to be. It would be very desirable if the Government were to undertake the introduction of such sorts as are usually seen at a London fishmonger's, and from experiments that have been **made** in the **artificial** rearing of salmon, it would no doubt succeed. A ship ought to be fitted **up** with tanks, wells and reservoirs, and it could not fail; or if it did **the** first and second time, let it be tried

again and **again**—ultimate success would most amply compensate for all the trouble and expense that might be incurred. Some years ago, a ship was sent into the Pacific, under Captain Bligh, to carry the **bread-fruit** tree to the West Indies. Should an incipient fishery be carried out, let us hope that in selecting a commander, the Government will be more **fortunate** than on that occasion. To this should be added, in large numbers, the thrush, skylark, linnnet, nightingale, blackbird, and all such other **birds** as we are used to at home—not forgetting our old friends the owl in all its varieties, and the cuckoo.

All the dairy produce is good, but dear. I have seen as good butter as the best Dorset or Cambridge, and their cream would really support a knife. Very little cheese is made; they principally import it from England, but they are now getting some of very fair quality from **Adelaide** in South Australia. I do not understand why they cannot make at home enough for their own consumption—but perhaps the high price of butter accounts for it,

Their general system of **farming—if it** can be called a system—is very bad, and you may hear large holders of land say, that manure, instead of being useful, is quite otherwise. To be sure, these are principally “gentlemen farmers,” who were not brought up as agriculturists, but whose views of farming are, that space is better than management, and that **after** having cleared a piece of land, you should crop it from year to year with wheat as long **as it** will bring any produce, then abandon it, clear a new piece, and crop as before. I do not think that this system is found to **answer** even in this country, and I am sure a very different opinion and practice—perhaps necessarily so—prevail in Old England, where they are supposed to know something. Any one who would wish to see what can be accomplished by a good system of cultivation should go and look at Campania, the splendid estate of Francis Smith, Esq. near **Richmond**. There may be seen what can be achieved by a judicious and skilful outlay of capital in the improvement of the Bush. It is understood that Mr. Smith in 1842 had a thousand acres in wheat, and as the season was favourable and the crops promising, the yield would be on an average at least **35** bushels to the acre. The whole of Mr. Smith's farming establishment is well worth notice, and should be followed as far as possible. To be sure, Mr. Smith has not only invested a large capital of his own in his improvements, but instead of borrowing at 10 or **15%** per cent. as too many others have done, has always a spare capital, with which, upon proper representations, he occasionally accommodates his friends at a moderate rate of interest.

Richmond Park is also well worth looking at, as are **also** many other improved estates in that **neighbourhood**.

They have a species of tiger here from three to four feet long; but the kangaroos of various species are the principal inhabitants of the forests : the largest, the boomer, which we have been accustomed to see in England in the **travelling** menageries from Pidcock to Wombwell, is fast disappearing—they used to be in such numbers at Prosser's Plains, that a large and high hill skirting the river was named after them. I only saw one in a wild state, but they were continually shot by those who would take the trouble to follow them, and when the 'hind quarters were **well** cooked and steamed with bacon, were not bad eating, but I never could fancy that they were at all equal to a hare dressed after the manner so graphically described by Mrs. Glasse or any of her successors. The tail made into soup was good, and certainly might be mistaken for ox-tail if the stock had been well prepared from beef beforehand. Their skins (large quantities of which are sent to England) when well tanned make good upper leathers for boots and shoes, but will not stand the weather like our calfskins, From their softness and pliability, I should think they would answer well for book-binding, which I dare say the "trade" have long since found out, The numerous kangaroos and opossums are very destructive to the growing crops ; the latter are shot only for their fur, which is much used in hat-making—their flesh is given to the dogs. The opossum is very shy, and can only be got at on a moonlight night, when they may be seen **on** the branches of trees, feeding on the young leaves. Shooting-parties are very frequently made up to go into the Bush for three or four days together, about the time of full moon, when they usually have some good sport, and as they take care to be well provided with "creature comforts," they enjoy themselves very much "**aux Gitanas**." I have heard some very animated descriptions given of the diversions experienced on these occasions, but I was never induced to try **them, sleeping** in the Bush not being at all to my taste.

At Hutton Park, the seat of John Bisdee, Esq. there is a herd of fallow deer, I understand the **only one** in the island, which is to be allowed to increase for a few years, whilst the benevolent and hospitable owner shall be in England, where I understand he is going for the education of his sons. As municipal institutions for **Hobarton** and Launceston are about being granted, these will furnish splendid haunches of venison to grace the civic feasts, and added to a few tureens of real turtle, which there will be no **difficulty** in obtaining, with such other good things as the country affords, will exhibit a banquet worthy of the gods, or fall very little short of the sumptuous feeds at the Guildhall or Mansion-house on such occasions. Two of the deer at one time had strayed into my country; I took great pains to preserve them, but some