

PAPERS
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ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA
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THE EARLY TASMANIAN PRESS, AND ITS
STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

By Herbert Heaton, M.A., M. Comm.; Lecturer in History
and Economics in the University of Tasmania.

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The figures in brackets refer to the notes at the end of
this paper.

It would be quite impossible to deal at all adequately with the early history of our press in anything less than a substantial volume. During the first fifty years of the colony, at least forty newspapers made their humble bow to the Tasmanian public. There were weeklies, fortnightly, monthlies, and quarterlies; there were sporting papers, teetotal advocates (1), church newses, and Irish exiles' leaflets (2). One marvels at the sublime faith in human intelligence exhibited by the founders of this multitude of publications, and one smiles at the unmercenary idealism of their introductory editorials. Each new editor, who was often an old one renovated, appeals to the sound common-sense and progressive sympathies of every right-thinking man in the colony. The motto of the paper is to be principles rather than personalities, criticism without cant, praise without adulation, truth and justice wherever they may be found. And in nine cases out of ten, the subsequent history is tragically similar. A non-reading or an apathetic public, a few subscribers who received copies and never paid for them, an occasional advertisement obtained only by offering a specially low rate; a few issues, perhaps a dozen or a score at most, and then, without any warning, a silence. Journalistic failures bestrewed the path of

Van Diemen's Land's progress, and their starved young corpses lay on the roadside, or were gathered up, and decently interred in the vault where the Chief Secretary's records are now stored.

Of these transient newspaper enterprises I intend to say no more in this paper. Our chief consideration will be with the more permanent successes, and we shall attempt to trace the line of journalistic succession, thanks to which Tasmania has been well supplied with news from 1816 to the present day.

The colony had not been long in existence before the first news-sheet made its appearance. In the early part of 1810, six years after the foundation of Hobart, the *Derwent Star and Van Diemen's Land Intelligencer* was issued. Governor Collins had brought out with him the type and a very primitive press, in order to be able to print Government notices, etc. He handed this stock-in-trade over to Messrs. Barnes and Clark; the Deputy Surveyor-General was appointed editor, and the paper was kept carefully under the Governor's supervision. The journal, the size of half a sheet of foolscap, printed on both sides, was issued fortnightly, and cost two shillings a copy. Its contents were chiefly Government announcements, but advertisements, shipping news, and other odds and ends, were inserted if space permitted.

This first effort was doomed to failure. The population of the island cannot have been more than a thousand white folks, and of these not more than a sixth could be regarded as constituting the reading public. Hence there was a very small possible circulation, and even at two shillings a copy it would be difficult to meet expenses. Still, the paper struggled on for a few months, but it was a hopeless task, and before the end of the year the venture expired.

A similar failure was experienced in 1814, when the *Van Diemen's Land Gazette* collapsed after nine fortnightly appearances (3). Two years more were to elapse before a paper appeared which surmounted all initial difficulties, and established itself permanently. This was the *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, the first issue of which was made on Saturday, June 1, 1816. It was printed by Andrew Bent, a man to whom great honour is due as the father of the Tasmanian press. Bent was apparently an illiterate man, to whom reading was no easy task. But he possessed just those qualities of keen business insight, dogged perseverance, and ingenuity, which were essential in press enterprise of that time. He seems to have come to an arrangement with Lieutenant-Governor Davey, by

which the *Gazette* was to be the official organ for the publication of Government notices. In return, he was to receive a small annual subsidy from the authorities, and the paper was to be entirely his own property. Any space available when the Governor's demands had been met could be filled up with general news, advertisements, etc.; but the Governor was to have a final voice in the choice of editor, thus exercising a kind of censorship. On this understanding Bent set to work, obtained a small supply of type and a press, and the first number appeared in due course, to be followed regularly by an issue every Saturday. Bent's trepidation does not appear on the surface, but eight and a half years later, in the first number for 1825, he tells of the fears and doubts entertained at the outset. "Our type was so limited that we could not compose at once more than is contained in one of our present-sized columns. There was no printing ink in the colony, but what we were necessitated to manufacture in the best possible manner for ourselves, and common Chinese paper, no more than half the size of foolscap, and of which two sheets were consequently obliged to be pasted together for each *Gazette*, cost two guineas sterling per ream! Exclusive of all these things, where was the public, whose cash, correspondence, and countenance are necessary to support a weekly press? Where could readers be found, except in some thirty or forty dwellings? Was it likely that a paper could flourish, where the only intelligence bore reference to crime, and the usual records were of infamy? It was not!" Whether possible or not, Bent decided to take the risk (4).

The first number (5) is of some interest. A single sheet, 11ins. by 7ins., printed in two columns, on one side of the paper only. It is "Published by Authority," and bears the royal arms, with the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown. Underneath comes an official intimation of Government support:—"His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has thought proper to direct that all public communications which may appear in the *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, signed with any official signature, are to be considered as official communications made to those persons to whom they may relate. By command of His Honor,

"THOMAS ALLEN LASCELLES, Secretary."

Then follows a notice of a festive character. Tuesday, 4th June, is the anniversary of the King's Birthday, and is, therefore, to be regarded as holiday throughout the settlement. The troops will parade in front of Government House at noon, and fire a "Feiu de Joie" (*sic*), followed

by a salute of twenty-one guns from the artillery. "The Deputy Assistant Commissary-General will cause to be issued to each of the Non-commissioned Officers and private Soldiers one Pound of Fresh Meat and Half a Pint of Spirits, to drink His Majesty's Health. The Deputy Assistant Commissary-General will also cause to be issued to the several Superintendents, Overseers, Constables, and other Persons in the actual Employ of the Government one Pound of Fresh Meat and Half a Pint of Spirits each on the above occasion. The Government Mechanics and Labourers will be exempted from work on Tuesday next." Evidently life in the early days was not a quite unbroken round of joyless toil.

Immediately underneath follows the welcome announcement that there is on sale at W. Presnel's store, in Collins Street, a quantity of the best Brazil tobacco at 7s. sterling per pound. An account of court proceedings comes next, and this, along with two items of shipping news, exhausts the local information. Two-thirds of the second column are still to be filled, and the editor takes refuge in publishing "Anecdotes of Frederic the II., the late King of Prussia," anecdotes which redound greatly to the heart and head of that monarch, but have no direct bearing on the affairs of Hobart Town.

Such are the tidings presented to the eager public by Bent's first issue. No. 2 is more attractive; the King's Birthday has come and gone, so there is plenty to record. A spirited account of the jubilations is given, ending as follows:—"At Six o'Clock in the Evening a sumptuous and splendid Dinner was given at Government House, at which were present the Officers, Civil and Military, the Commanders of the different Ships in the Harbour, and the Gentlemen of Hobart Town and its neighbourhood. Hilarity and loyalty pervaded every Breast, and the hours passed with the utmost conviviality." At least twelve of the gentlemen present were in the proper frame of mind and body to do justice to such a banquet, for immediately underneath the above paragraph, we read that on the morning of the same day, "a FOOT RACE between Twelve Gentlemen took place on the Road to New Town, . . . a distance of two miles; the first Six Gentlemen that gained the goal were to be the winner of a Dinner, to be given by the unsuccessful competitors" (6).

Apart from such trivialities, there is little local news in the early issues. Presumably, as was the custom in the newspaper world at that time, local events were supposed to be either too well known to be chronicled, or not worth recording. Hence the only Tasmanian news tells of

sensational events, such as the depredations of the bush-rangers, the movements of the aborigines, murders, thefts, elopements, or the drowning of messengers while fording flooded streams. The weather occupies much space each week. We hear of settlers selling their wives in order to obtain stock for their farms (7); we watch the rapid progress of horse-racing towards universal popularity; we learn that very big rats are swarming over parts of the island, biting children in their sleep (8), and this information is followed by an infallible recipe for rat poison. Persons over seventy years of age marry (9). A tradesman away up country receives a draft for £20, and adds a cipher to make it £200. When charged with forgery, he admits the act, but justifies it by saying that when he was at school he was told that a cipher stood for naught, and so he considers it extremely hard that for *nothing* he should be charged with a capital offence (10). As the paper expanded from two to four columns, voluminous quotations from English and Sydney papers were inserted, the English news being four to six months old. The aftermath of Waterloo was recorded at great length; Napoleon and St. Helena formed favourite subjects; the fate of Murat and Ney was depicted with gruesome details, and encomiums on Wellington, in prose and poetry, were always welcomed. The people of Hobart were given dazzling pictures of the introduction of gas lights into London (11), and on the death of any member of the Royal Family, the paper appeared with a deep black border. Columns of "Hansard" were reproduced when the House of Commons had been discussing colonial matters, and in the issue of April 5, 1817, appears a very interesting extract from the Report on the Condition of the Distressed Poor in England. At that time the fears concerning French designs on Australia had abated for a time; but England, with her innate love of "scares," decided that Russia intended to take up the ambitions of France. The possibility of a Russian descent on India and Australia was seriously discussed by English politicians and writers. Hence, when the Parliamentary Committee suggested remedies for England's poverty and distress, it urged the importance of encouraging emigration to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, for the purpose of populating the southern lands, and also to provide a "*point d'appui* against the encroachments of Russian aggrandisement." This section of the report was quoted at length in the *Gazette* as soon as the document reached Hobart.

Apropos of this Russian scare, it is interesting to note that in 1823 the *Gazette* recorded the visit of two Russian

discovery ships to Hobart. In the issue of 31st May we read: "Yesterday morning His Imperial Russian Majesty's Discovery Ships, the *Creuzer* and the *Ladoga*, put into our port to refresh, having been three months from Rio de Janeiro." The visitors stayed three weeks, during which time they were banquetted by the military officers and merchants, and, eventually, on the 21st June, they "proceeded in prosecution of their voyage of discovery." Where the discoveries were to be we are not told, nor does the subsequent history of Australia give any record of a Russian attempt to annex any part of the continent. But it is quite possible that this Russian roving commission was allied to the fear of French schemes on West Australia, which brought about the English settlements at Albany and the Swan River in 1825-1831.

One of the chief interests of the *Gazette* lay in chronicling the progress of the island, and the discovery of its latent resources. Bent and his editor were ardent believers in a "Big Tasmania." They were convinced that Van Diemen's Land possessed all the necessities required to make it a second England, and their columns were always open to any correspondent who had news or suggestions likely to assist in the development of the colony. Thus, in the second issue, we are told of the discovery of a fine coal seam on the Gordon River; the seam is six feet thick, providing "an inexhaustible mine of coal," the mouth of which could be within ten yards of the water's edge. Having published this account, the editor goes on to survey the known mineral resources of the colony. Coal has been found in many parts, slate and limestone are at our very doors, whilst marle and lime, invaluable for farmers, are here in abundance. On the strength of these discoveries, the writer compares Tasmania's resources with those of New South Wales:—"These are natural advantages the country of Port Jackson doth not possess, and which will enable the Agriculturalists of Van Diemen's Land to carry on their Agriculture to much greater success than the Inhabitants of Port Jackson will ever be able to do, as neither marle nor limestone have hitherto been found on the eastern side of the Blue Mountains" (12). This strong sense of the superiority of our island over New South Wales was to a great extent justified at the time. Tasmania had been eminently successful in the production of wheat, and in normal years produced far more than was necessary for its own requirements. It seemed very probable that the colony was destined to be the granary of Australia, and possibly the workshop as well. Witness the editor's comments on June 29, 1816:—"25,000

bushels of wheat have already been exported to Port Jackson out of the late harvest, and still there is enough and to spare for our own needs. From this earnest of industry and fertility in so young a colony, and with so small a population, the mind is led to contemplate on its prosperity and happiness at a remote period, when agriculture shall be brought to a state of perfection; when a population more than is requisite for the purposes of agriculture will support the Arts and Commerce, extended through their means; when fair Science and the Liberal Arts will rear their heads, and all the benefits of political society be universally felt." Look at the greatness of Rome; her strength was based on agriculture: every successful empire has been built up on the foundations of prosperous husbandry. "So proud an example ought to stimulate us to persevere in agriculture. All is in our favour, Climate, Soil, Manures, etc. Our wheat has already found one Market for its superabundance, and more is likely to be soon opened to us. Our Barley can be made into beer, to the great benefit of the country, and it is to be hoped that every other article of Produce will find a vent. 'Ye generous Britons, venerate the Plough,' is the exhortation of the Melodious Bard." A fine editorial, and read with approbation by many a free settler in the island. But such sentiments were distinctly unpalatable to Sydney, and when the editor of the *Sydney Gazette* took up the cudgels against his Hobart rival, a wordy warfare ensued. There were few journalistic niceties in those days, and the blows struck were hard and merciless. The Hobart editor succeeded in keeping his temper, though with difficulty, and eventually on December 24, 1824, he complained of the "ill-bred and waspish personalities" of the Sydney writer, and the "little jealousies arising from the HOURLY DEVELOPING SUPERIORITY OF TASMANIA."

There was little real cause for jealousy, for both colonies were making steady progress. To this progress the *Hobart Town Gazette* contributed very materially. In an age when scientific literature on agriculture was scarce in Tasmania, the *Gazette* rendered great service by publishing articles of prime importance to settlers on the land. In the fifth issue (13) appeared the first instalment of an article on the possibilities of growing hops in the island. This article began on the note of temperance, a note which always found a welcome hearing in the *Gazette*. The consumption of spirits was very great (14), a fact responsible for many of the problems which confronted the authorities. The *Gazette* fought against the liquor trade year after year, and many quaint articles and diagrams on

temperance can be found scattered about its pages. The article on hopgrowing begins: "How much more delicious to the parched and thirsty Labourer in the field in Harvest Season would be the cheering and sparkling cup of Ale to the draught of grog! What sums of money would be left in the Colony, or applied to other uses, was Ale and Beer the general Beverage! What excesses would be avoided, and crimes less likely to be committed! It would be to the interest of every Settler to endeavour to have a Barrel of good Ale in his House, instead of Gallons of Rum." For these reasons, the writer, "*Pro Bono Publico*," details at length (through six issues of the *Gazette*) the best methods of cultivating the hop. The article had great effects, and within six or seven years hop gardens and breweries were numerous in the southern part of the island. Similar contributions dealt with the growth of corn, the destruction of pests, the rearing of sheep, etc., and great attention was devoted by the *Gazette* to fostering the export trade in wool. In short, the *Gazette*, though small in size and circulation, strove to exert a powerful influence for material and moral progress.

With the growth of the paper came an increase in the number of advertisements, and from the advertisement columns one gets, perhaps, the best picture of the social and economic conditions existing in the settlement. Over all there loomed the shadow of the system; one can never for a moment forget that the island was, as Henry Melville called it, "a gaol on a large scale" (15). The Government notices and the court proceedings, the lists of tickets-of-leave and of escaped prisoners, all keep the grim sternness of the life before our eyes. And yet, partly because of, and partly in spite of, the system, a flourishing little commercial society was arising. The prisoners, the officials, and the troops, had to be fed, clothed, and housed, and the increasing number of free settlers made the demand for a variety of commodities comparatively great. Scarcely a month passed without the arrival of some sailing ship from the Old Country, bringing passengers, mails, and general cargo. One watches the size of the vessels creep up from 200 to 500 tons, and the length of the journey diminish from six months to four. American and Dutch boats were frequent visitors, and the Hobart-Sydney trade was growing rapidly, especially in wheat. It is interesting to note in passing that one of the best-known vessels here was the *Lusitania*. She was a boat of 250 tons, which did the outward journey from London in four and a half months. She was advertised as offering "superior accommodation for Passengers," and an advertisement in

the *Gazette* for August 16, 1823, reads like an announcement of the attractions of her ill-fated descendant:—"For London direct. . . the regular trader *Lusitania*. . . Her accommodations for passengers are very superior, and to those who may be sending their children to Europe to be educated, a desirable opportunity is offered, the passage of several being already engaged; female attendance will be provided, and every attendance paid them."

The advertisements of houses and land have a familiar modern ring about them. There are "highly eligible plots of land," "farms with never-failing creeks," and "very commodious weatherboarded houses" or "substantial brick-built houses pleasantly situated." But the tradesmen's notices are the most interesting. The specialised store, keeping only one sort of commodities, did not emerge until the late thirties. Up to that time the general store or warehouse held the field. The storekeeper received mixed consignments from England or elsewhere, and then inserted a half-column announcement in the *Gazette*, drawing attention to his wares. For instance, to take an advertisement from the *Gazette* of May 17, 1823, Mr. Deane informs the public at large that "the following valuable articles are just landed from the late arrivals, and will be offered for sale at the usual low prices." Then follows a list of over one hundred commodities, including calicoes, muslins, blankets, a fresh assortment of ladies' false curls, fine split-straw bonnets, a large assortment of books, consisting of Shakespeare's Plays, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Self-interpreting Bible, Peregrine Pickle, Watts' Divine Songs, etc., ironmongery, Jews' harps, tea by the chest, rice and pepper by the bag, Jamaica rum by the cask.

In trading the currency problem was very acute, all manner of coinage being in use. English money was in circulation, but along with it were Spanish dollars, and rupees, and all seem to have been accepted with equal readiness in payment of bills. Thus, the *Australian Almanack* was published at "Three Rupees" (16); the *Van Diemen's Land Almanack*, issued in 1824 by Bent, was priced at one dollar (17), and advertisements for lost property generally offered a reward in dollars. But even with this mongrel coinage the currency was inadequate, and simple barter had to be adopted. Mr. Deane, whose list of goods has been quoted, was willing to take wheat at 8s. per bushel, wool, skins, seal-skins, and all colonial produce as payment (18). Another trader announced (August 10, 1816), that he had seven casks of Virginia leaf tobacco for sale; that he would allow three years' credit, and that payment could then be made in wheat or meat at storehouse

price. Farmers away inland generally made purchases in large quantities, receiving credit on the security of the next harvest, with the result that some of them smoked and drank away their whole crop before it was harvested. Even passage money was occasionally paid in produce, and one often encounters notices like the following:—"It being the intention of Captain Dixon to touch at Rio de Janeiro, wheat will be taken for payment of passage money either to Rio or to England" (19).

To the housewife many interesting statements as to the prices of commodities are scattered up and down the early numbers of the *Gazette*. The prices of imported articles, especially those on which duties were imposed, were high. Tea ranged from 8s. to 15s. a pound, sugar 1s. per lb. Tobacco was obtainable at 6s. to 12s. per lb., whilst rum stood at 20s. a gallon, and one gallon of rum passed for currency in many parts as equivalent to £1 sterling. Fresh butter cost 5s. per lb. The housewife's chief trouble lay in the price of bread. The price was fixed by assize; this assize was supposed to be revised weekly (20), in accordance with the prevailing price of wheat or flour, but such revision was not done at all effectively. Hence, even in times when wheat was cheap, the price of the loaf remained high. This discrepancy drew forth the following editorial protest in the *Gazette* of June 11, 1824:—"The glaring disproportion between what our bakers pay for their wheat and what we have to pay for our bread at length compels even us to murmur. Surely our worthy magistrates will deign to interfere, and in their equity to modify the assize, that those who lean on the staff of life as well as those who prepare it may find support."

The above picture is that presented to us by the *Gazette* during the first eight years of its life. Those years had comprised a momentous period in the history of the journal. Week after week it had been issued regularly, slowly extending its circulation. There had been many difficulties to overcome. The first was that of type. The supply available when Bent began was very small, and if by any chance a special demand was made for a large supply of one particular letter, difficulties arose. Bent was short of small "a's." Therefore, he had to use italics, capitals, and ordinary letters indifferently, producing a very strange effect on the printed page, as for instance, in the third issue, where the words "pAyment" and "severAl" occur. Again, his supply of capitals was small; hence when he had to set up a number of short Government notices, the capitals were exhausted long before the heading of the last notice was reached, and "government house,

hobart town, saturday" was printed devoid of a solitary capital letter (21). It was many months before a larger supply could be obtained from England. With the arrival of Governor Sorell, in 1817, the amount of Government matter increased, and soon the single sheet had to be supplemented by a second one. At times four sides were covered with print, and when a death occurred in the Royal House, five or six sides were required in all to make room for the obituary notices. By 1818, all type difficulties had been overcome. Small pictures of ships and houses began to grace the advertisement columns. The size of the paper was increased to large foolscap, and three columns per page became the rule. Even then it was often necessary to add a second sheet, and this four-page production was a really creditable piece of work. In April, 1821, Governor Macquarie visited the island, and Bent celebrated the event by publishing an "Extraordinary" in mid-week, the first "Special" published in the island (22). By this time Bent was ready to do copper-plate printing; he published a school primer and spelling book, and acquired a stock of copybooks from England, with which he supplied the schools that were now being formed. The newspaper improved every month, and at the beginning of 1824 it became a four-page paper, with four columns per page, excellently arranged and printed. In 1823 the press had been moved into larger premises in Elizabeth-street; bookbinders' tools had been obtained, and Bent was now a publisher, stationery dealer, and bookbinder. He therefore conceived the idea of issuing the *Van Diemen's Land Almanack*, which made its appearance in 1824; it was a creditable little volume, sold at 5s., and was the ancestor of *Walch's Red Book* of present fame.

When the difficulty of inadequate type had been removed, Bent found another problem before him, one not nearly so easy to solve. The settlers, especially those in the Midlands and North, had welcomed the *Gazette*, and Bent, with his usual diligence, spared no pains to see that the copies reached their destination. But when the first quarter's accounts were sent out, many of the settlers disregarded them. Just as the doctor's bill is the last to be paid to-day, so was the printer's bill the last to receive attention then. The settler obtained his rum and tobacco on three years' credit; why not his paper on the same terms? For a time Bent did not press his claims, but eventually, in 1819, it became necessary to state "that unless his demands (were) regularly adjusted quarterly he must unavoidably relinquish his endeavours to supply the *Gazette*" (23). Two years later (1821), the same trouble

arose, and Bent inserted the following in his columns:—"The Printer of this Paper takes occasion to request a settlement of accounts from those indebted to him. Some of the accounts alluded to, he begs to remind, are for papers since the commencement, and having escaped recollection year after year, really ought to be paid without the trouble that accompanies the necessity of a legal application. He, therefore, trusts that this timely request will give such subscribers an opportunity to prevent him from resorting to so unpleasant a measure, and that they will speedily come and pay for their papers" (24). Not they! The appeal had very little effect, and Bent put matters into the hands of his lawyer; the cases were brought into court, and the defaulters ordered to pay. Even then many ignored the verdict, and after waiting a month, Bent stated that he would be willing to accept payment in wheat (25). This had some effect, but year after year the same trouble arose. Bent cut off the supply of papers, and began to demand payment in advance. In 1824 some farmers promised to pay after the harvest, and then failed to keep their promise (26). Bent threatened and cajoled; if they refused to pay, the court would compel them; if they did pay, the printer would not only feel thankful, but would make them each a present of an *Almanack* (26).

Amidst such difficulties, Bent plodded on, and built up an excellent business. In the first issue of 1824, he surveyed with satisfaction his past struggles, and indicated his ideas for expansion. The paper now had sixteen columns, of which Government notices and advertisements took up more than one half. The rest was filled with local news, Sydney notes, and English extracts. Bent felt the time had come to admit the public to his columns, and he therefore announced as follows:—"We have often had occasion to remark that the small scale of our paper hitherto would not admit of our inserting Correspondent's letters. . . . As our columns will now allow of the insertion of more matter, and as the well-informed part of the community might be disposed to fill up a leisure hour in communicating through the Press the result of their knowledge, observation, or practice, on subjects important to the interests and pursuits of the Colony, we now feel a pleasure in having it in our power to state that our enlarged paper will henceforth enable us to give publicity to all communications which may appear useful or interesting to our readers" (27).

Bent little realised that in issuing this invitation he was opening the gate to the floods of misfortune which assailed him very soon. He had not long to wait for the

correspondents. They were of two kinds, versifiers on the one hand, political and agricultural authorities on the other. Of the would-be poets, a few sent lines which well deserved the publicity afforded them, and original poetry became quite a feature of the *Gazette*. But of the great majority, the editor mercifully committed their efforts to oblivion. In every issue appeared a short section in which the editor replied "To Correspondents." The editorial pen was often dipped in gall to write this section, and the verdicts on the poets were severe:—

"W. had better attend to the ducks and geese and swine he speaks of than attempt poetry."

"Our enlightened correspondent, 'E.H.T.,' need not be offended at our rejection of his 'Alphabetical Reminiscences,' as they were considered uninteresting merely because they were too classical for ordinary readers."

'Lines on Beauty' are so utterly devoid of it that in pity to 'Lothario' we shall burn them."

"We are sorry to tell 'A Philosopher' he is ignorant of mankind."

"'Vurses on Kangeru Huntin' by a Stockkeeper, are no doubt very fine, but they are above our comprehension."

"We have no wish to blight the hopes of our Correspondent who signs himself 'A Bud,' yet in the Muses' bower we seriously think he will never prove a Blossom."

Whilst the poets were turned away, the letter-writers were accorded a more favourable reception. At first the letters were perfectly harmless. Political criticism was scarcely ever attempted, for Lieut.-Governor Sorell was a universal favourite, and it is doubtful if there were a dozen settlers in the island sufficiently dissatisfied with his rule to pen a letter. Hence the correspondence was chiefly commercial and agricultural. The growth of tobacco, frauds in weights and measures, faults in the currency, the need for a central market, or for a museum of natural history, these were the staple topics, discussed by writers with such perennial pseudonyms as Agricola, Rusticus, An Old Settler, Patriot, Constant Reader, Another Constant Reader, Britannia, Colonist, Veritas, etc. The *Gazette* welcomed such contributions as good "copy," and a number of the letters contained valuable agricultural advice.

Then the change began, and soon Bent's sky was full of dark clouds. On 15th March, 1824, J. L. Pedder arrived from England to become the first Chief Justice of the newly-established Supreme Court, and Mr. J. T. Gellibrand came to become Attorney-General. Two months later, Col. Arthur reached Hobart, to take the place of

Sorell. The colonists did not welcome the new-comer. Sorell had been easy-going and affable. His rule had laid lightly on the free settlers, and he was no fastidious worshipper of elaborate organisation or regulation. On the other hand, Arthur's reputation was that of a stern soldier, with a high hand and an iron heel; a man keen on order, efficiency, and discipline; a man who, placed at the head of a colony which was a penal settlement as well as a home for free settlers, would rule it as a penal settlement, pure and simple. Such a man was bound to clash with the spirit which was manifesting itself among the free settlers. They were formulating demands for liberation from the control of Sydney, for trial by jury, and for representative government, demands which were not all compatible with the fundamental character of the settlement.

The trouble soon commenced. Immediately on his entry to office, Arthur appointed his nephew, John Montagu, Colonial Secretary, and drew round himself a circle of advisers and officials appointed almost entirely from amongst the new arrivals. He reorganised the prison system, tightened the discipline, and by a series of orders placed the whole penal and political life of the colony on a different footing. He seems to have paid little regard to those who had been the friends and advisers of his predecessor, and even less to the manner in which things had been done formerly.

Such an attitude promptly aroused opposition from those who thought themselves slighted, and this was reflected in the correspondence to the *Gazette*. When the new Governor arrived, Bent determined to shake himself free from such Government supervision as had formerly been attached to his paper. Up to this time, the editor had been appointed by the Governor, but Bent now dismissed the old editor, and appointed Evan Henry Thomas, a well-educated and fluent writer, in his place (28). Thomas soon began to venture an occasional mild protest against official sins of omission and commission, and passed for publication one or two letters in which the protests were more strongly worded. Chief amongst the critics of the Government was Robert Lathrop Murray, who wrote under the nom-de-plume of "A Colonist." Murray's letters usually filled three or four columns of the paper, and contained a few grains of wheat in the midst of a stack of chaff. There was plenty of vague generalising, largely much ado about nothing; but having read through the mass of words, one perceived dimly that "Colonist" had been criticising the new Governor. The editor, in publishing such letters, pleaded for greater brevity, and stated

quite clearly that personalities, invective, political or religious controversy would not be allowed to pass his censorship (29). To those who sent details of scandals, he replied: "If what you say is true, the Supreme Court is the fit place to reveal the facts, not a newspaper" (30). Such protests and disclaimers, however, did not placate the Governor. Veiled criticisms were being made in the press; they must be stopped. In June or July, 1824, therefore, Arthur endeavoured to assert his authority over the *Gazette*, by claiming it as Government property. Bent strenuously defended himself, declared that the paper belonged entirely to him, and sent Thomas, his editor, to lay the case before Arthur's superior in Sydney, Sir Thomas Brisbane. The verdict was entirely in Bent's favour (31), and in the *Gazette* of October 8, 1824, a mysterious and triumphant editorial revealed sufficient of the facts to allow the public to guess the remainder. This editorial was assumed by many to be a veiled attack on Arthur, but Thomas vigorously denied any such intention, in the following issue. "We bow down with all merited homage to the (representative) of our glorious Monarch," concluded the article, and in his refusal to publish anonymous attacks on officials, Thomas showed that he had no intention of being a bigoted partisan.

These protests were of little avail, for the new Governor had quickly decided that action must be taken against the *Gazette*. That determination grew as the editorials and "Colonist's" letters became bolder in their tone. First, the police force was criticised. Then complaints made in letters were enlarged upon. Editorials nearly all began now with such sentences as "Much general inconvenience is being felt," or "Repeated complaints have been made." Real or imaginary scandals in the employment of convict labour were dragged out, and the new harbour regulations were said to be ruining the port. "Colonist" laboured at great length to prove that Arthur had allowed himself to be misled by a host of evil and interested subordinates; that he had created a small army of sinecures for his friends, with big salaries and little work; that the colonial revenue was thereby being squandered, and that meanwhile farmers and merchants were trembling on the brink of ruin (32). The editor, possibly intoxicated by the vigour of this attack, wrote article after article in similar vein. He pleaded with the Governor (33) to do something "to re-nerve the drooping energies of Van Diemen's Land, and to eventually realise those sanguine expectations" which had brought the free settlers here. "If ever destiny decreed a crisis at which a smiling colony might either by Minis-

terial neglect be suffered to perish irremediably, or by Ministerial succours be restored to its *ne plus ultra* of elevation and prosperity, that crisis is at hand." The harvest had been deficient, but "Why should distress stalk through the furrowed vales of Van Diemen's Land" because the settlers had no seed, when the Government could easily obtain some and supply the farmers on easy terms? Still stronger words were to follow. On May 20, 1825, the editor made a fierce attack on Arthur's administration, concluding with the following sarcastic paragraph:—"It is much better that a few supine, ignorant, and extravagantly-hired Public Officers should be galled for their misconduct than that a whole community should be crushed, enslaved, and subjugated. Had the former administration of this Colony been anti-commercial, anti-agricultural, and anti-local in every sense, perhaps by this time our necks would have been seasoned to the yoke. . . . The truth is that Col. Sorell governed this Island with a fixed and amiable view to its elevation—that he reasoned before he presumed to act—that he acted in compliance with reason—and consequently that wealth in combination with improvement, respectability, and happiness, sprang up beneath the fructifying smile of his administration. But note well, has a transition, at once mischievous and melancholy, occurred since his departure? Have the merchants been insulted? And are the sons of husbandry abandoned? Has the public money, which ought to be always used in public improvements, been lavished on the worse than superfluous dependants of at most but a fleeting authority? Has public judgment been set at naught, and public feeling violated? Has proper intercourse between the governed and the Government been rudely curtailed and unwisely interfered with? These and numerous other truly caustic questions might now be advanced. Nevertheless, as our Monarch's delegate may yet become popular, if he will condescend to learn wisdom from experience, and henceforth legitimately exercise his power for the welfare of all who are committed to his care, we shall at present refrain from saying much which, though deserved, might give offence. . . . What we have said is well meant; what we have said is felt by the Public; and what we have said, if properly attended to, will render the heart of every honest Colonist a shrine of respect for Lieut.-Governor Arthur."

Flesh and blood could bear no more, and within a week Arthur's plans for retaliation were complete. Since Bent was not amenable to official pressure, the position of Government Printer must pass into the hands of some

more pliable person. Arthur discovered the desired character in George Terry Howe, son of the George Howe who in 1803 had established the *Sydney Gazette* (34). Howe had begun to publish *The Tasmanian* in Launceston early in 1825, but he was now approached by Arthur, and offered the post of Government Printer in Hobart. He was promised a subsidy of £300 a year, in place of the £30 which had been paid annually to Bent (35). Attracted by these terms, Howe came to Hobart, and after arranging a partnership with James Ross, LL.D., a brilliant Scotsman living in Hobart, he produced his first copy of the *Hobart Town Gazette* on June 25, 1825.

The name of the paper was frankly pirated from Bent, but the protests of the latter were met with the retort that the title was one which belonged only to the official organ of the Government, and that as Bent's paper had sacrificed its claim to official recognition, it had *ipso facto* lost its title. Bent eventually was compelled to accept the new situation, and in August his paper appeared under the name of the *Colonial Times*. Meanwhile the new *Gazette*, though printed at first in very inferior style, showed no penitence for its usurpation, and the two journals filled many columns flinging gibes and journalistic mud at each other. The *Gazette* took up an attitude of appreciation towards the Government, and sang the praises of Arthur's administration (36). A letter by "Colonist" which had formerly appeared in the old *Gazette* was reprinted, but with every "No" turned to "Yes," with "unsatisfactory" changed to "satisfactory," and with every criticism transformed into a commendation (37). Arthur could rely on the loyal support of his new printers, in spite of the editorial assertion that the opinions expressed in the new journal were "free and uncontrolled."

Having succeeded in this first attack on Bent and his supporters, Arthur now pressed on to the second. The rebel printer must be sued for libel. Out of the mass of anti-governmental utterances, two were selected. The first was the editorial which referred to the appeal to Sydney against Arthur's claim to the paper (38); the second related to statements made concerning Arthur's alleged misdeeds whilst Governor of Honduras (39). In commenting on the former incident, the editor had made a scarcely veiled reference to the Governor as a "Gibeonite of tyranny." The allusion, the exact meaning of which no one seemed to understand, was regarded as imputing some especially bad form of tyranny; and the second charge, to which a third was added subsequently (40), was based on the assertion that Bent had made imputations of tyranny,

corruption, and improper conduct against the Governor. Bent appeared before the Supreme Court several times, and, after prolonged trials and re-trials (41), was sentenced, on the verdict of a military jury, to six months' imprisonment, and to fines which, along with counsel's fees, amounted to £518 (42).

In the eyes of many free settlers this heavy punishment appeared to be flagrant persecution of a man who for ten years had struggled hard to keep the island provided with a newspaper. In July, 1826, a meeting was called of all "Friends of the Liberty of the Press," at which a subscription list was opened for Bent's benefit, and eventually Bent was recouped for his losses to the extent of about £250 (43). When liberated, the indomitable printer continued his former policy, with Murray ("Colonist") as editor of the *Colonial Times*. The paper became more than ever the organ of the malcontents, and the medium for scurrilous attacks on Arthur. No story was too bad to be true, and, according to the columns of the *Colonial Times*, the Governor and his minions were greedy, corrupt, tyrants, who were fast driving the colony into bankruptcy and revolt. Arthur meditated further reprisals, and early in January, 1827, ordered another prosecution for libel against Bent, who had reprinted from the *Australian*, a mainland paper, an extract which Arthur deemed to be personally offensive and libellous. Even the *Gazette* protested against this action (44), and the prosecution was withdrawn, in favour of measures for imposing legislative restraint on the whole press.

Arthur's attitude, though the cause of much vituperation at the time, calls for a certain amount of sympathy. He was in a difficult situation as the head of a colony which was at the same time a home of convicts and of free settlers. The free men, whose voices were heard in Bent's columns, were clamouring for the liberties they had enjoyed at Home, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, trial by jury, and representative responsible government. But the convict system made the granting of some, if not all, of these demands well-nigh impossible. Arthur's character and military training made him indifferent to such constitutional trifles. His business was to keep the convicts in order, and, as a secondary consideration, to develop the resources of the colony. But anything which militated against order amongst the convicts must be suppressed, even if it entailed the denial of citizenship to the free settlers. Hence, a perfectly free press, with the right to criticise as it pleased, was impossible. Discipline and quiet amongst the prisoners was the prime necessity ;

a free press was a mere luxury, and Tasmania had not yet reached the stage for luxuries. Arthur made his position clear to a deputation of fifty Hobart residents who waited on him in December, 1825, with a request for the suppression of disorder in the gaol and bushranging throughout the country (45). In his reply, Arthur pointed out that the cause of the outlawry and violence was to be found in the "factious principles disseminated in the colony through the medium of a licentious Press," the utterances of which had a disquieting effect on the convict population. "who, being for the most part men predisposed to evil, are unable to draw the necessary line between the liberty of writing and the liberty of acting, and who, seeing the Government insulted with impunity, and its measures characterised as the effort of weakness and imbecility, have been led to the delusive expectation that resistance to the constituted authorities might prove successful." The Hobart press, he declared, was "striving to alienate, as far as it was able, the community from the Government," and "tending to destroy the only rallying point on which the country could rest or from which it might reasonably expect to have its affairs retrieved" (46). In similar vein, Arthur declared about a year later that "so long as the colony was a place for the reception of convicts, the press could not be free: that it was dangerous to authority, and calculated to destroy the security of domestic life" (47). Arthur evidently presumed that the convicts could afford to procure copies of the paper (at one shilling each), and were able to read the printed word—both doubtful suppositions.

Holding the above opinions, Arthur now determined to gain more effective control over the press, through the agency of the newly-established Legislative Council. In New South Wales the freedom of the press, granted by Governor Brisbane in 1824, had caused much friction between the papers and the authorities, and Governor Darling was now attempting to regain control of the journalists. Arthur resolved to imitate Darling, and in September, 1827, the Legislative Council of Van Diemen's Land passed "An Act to regulate the Printing and Publishing of Newspapers, and for the Prevention of blasphemous and seditious Libels" (8 Geo. IV., No. 2) (48). The preamble stated the case for the Governor. The number of convicts was far greater than that of free settlers, and the colony was primarily a prison settlement. Newspapers had thrown off the official censorship, and had abused their freedom by publishing matter "calculated to diminish the due authority of the Government over transported

offenders. . . . and tending to bring the Government and the Administration into Public Hatred and Contempt.' Therefore, in order to stop the issue of the blasphemous and seditious libels, the Act decreed

(1.) That no person should print or publish a newspaper without having first obtained a license; this license was to be issued by the Governor, and must be renewed annually.

(2.) That if the licensee published any matter tending to bring into contempt or hatred the Royal Family, the Government or Constitution of the United Kingdom or of Tasmania, the license could be cancelled at once.

(3.) That each licensee should enter into a recognisance before the Chief Justice, along with two or three guarantors, the printer giving security to the extent of £400, and the others for a further £400, that no libel should be printed.

An accompanying Act (8 Geo. IV., No. 3) imposed a stamp duty of threepence per copy on all newspapers printed in the island, but allowed the Governor to reduce the duty at any time. Heavy penalties were to be imposed for printing on unstamped paper (49).

Armed with these Acts, Arthur felt secure, and at once refused to give Bent a license to print. The veteran printer tried various devices, including the publication of a sheet containing advertisements only; but at every turn the law pounced upon him, and he suffered heavily. At the same time, the *Gazette* ceased to print anything but Government notices, thus becoming an official notice-sheet and nothing more. Dr. Ross turned the non-official part of the old *Gazette* into a new paper, the *Hobart Town Courier*, in which he continued to pour out his wrath against the Radicals, and his mild flatteries of Arthur.

The passage of the newspaper Acts had been bitterly resented by the advocates of liberty, and a forcible protest, signed by fifty leading citizens, informed Arthur that the restrictions on the press were "needless, unconstitutional, and debasing—an insult to the colony, and contrary to the implied engagements of the Crown when emigration was invited" (50). Arthur gave an unsatisfactory reply, and the protest was therefore despatched to the Home authorities, with a request that the objectionable Acts might be disallowed. In December, 1828, the reply was received, supporting the colonists in their protest, and annulling both Acts (51).

Here ended the first phase in the struggle for liberty of the press. The result had been a partial rebuff for the Governor, who now for six years refrained from any

further libel suits. But in the struggle Bent had succumbed. He appears to have become bankrupt about 1827-8, and to have lost control of the *Colonial Times*. He made several spasmodic attempts at a later date, going to Sydney in 1835, where he published *Bent's News* in 1836, at the low price of threepence per copy (52). After four years this effort also failed; Bent lost his printing plant, and spent four years in destitution. In 1844 he issued a begging letter, asking for £50 to enable him to purchase a small press and set of type. The Australian papers took up his appeal, referring to him as the "scarred veteran of the Press," "the Father of the Tasmanian Press," and describing him as the

"Village champion, who, with dauntless breath,
The little tyrants of the place withstood."

Subscriptions flowed in. Governor Gipps sent £5; Chief Justice Stephen, who had been one of Bent's most bitter enemies in the 'twenties, forgot old feuds, and gave £4. But Bent was now evidently worn out, and, in spite of a long subscription list, he did nothing more for Australian journalism. His story is a pathetic episode in our early history, and his dauntless fights, often for men who, like R. L. Murray, were not worth fighting for, entitle him to a niche in Tasmanian history as a practical friend of progress and a political martyr. His epitaph can best be written in the words of an Australian editor who supported his begging appeal:—"One who has suffered so much persecution—the loss of personal liberty and property—in his praiseworthy efforts to expose the prevailing errors of the day, and to raise the tone of society" (53).

The struggle between Arthur and the press began its second phase in 1835. By this time many new figures had appeared, and the Radical party in Hobart had become strong, being organised in the "Political Association." The absence of trial by jury and of representative government gave the malcontents a splendid peg on which to hang their attacks on Arthur. The undoubted material progress of the colony was ignored by this opposition party; on the other hand, every action of the Governor was seized upon, twisted out of its real shape, and made the subject of long, scurrilous articles in the *Colonial Times* and *True Colonist*. The former paper was now in the hands of Henry Melville, a clever, but strongly partisan, writer. Melville was an ardent Radical, and, incidentally, a keen advocate of the "single tax," and of heavier taxation of unimproved land (54). The *True*

Colonist, which was published daily for a time, had as its editor a wild, headstrong journalist, Gilbert Robertson. Robertson had no appreciation of the need for verifying one's facts, and was always ready to print any story if it reflected adversely on the authorities. This unfortunate faculty eventually brought Robertson into conflict with Arthur, and in 1835 he was sued for four distinct libels.

The nature of these libels illustrates the general nature of the scores of accusations which the two papers were constantly bringing against the Government. The first was that Arthur had, after the enrolment of a grant of land, made a correction of a clerical error, with the imputation that if he could correct clerical mistakes, he might also commit more serious alterations in deeds, amounting to forgery. For this insinuation Robertson, who was unable to prove his assertion, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment and a fine of £60. The second libel was an accusation that the Governor had appropriated hay from the Government farm at New Town for his own private use, a charge amounting to larceny. This brought on Robertson's head a fine of £120, and eight months' imprisonment. The third libel was against Mr. T. W. Rowlands, attorney of the Supreme Court, and for this offence the unlucky editor received a sentence of £20 fine and one month's imprisonment. Whilst he was serving his accumulated period of thirteen months in gaol, a fourth charge was brought against him, that he had libellously attempted to defame the Governor and his nephew, Captain Montagu. Robertson had charged Montagu with having used a large quantity of Government materials and labour in building himself a "mansion" in Hampden-row, and afterwards, to cover his offence, had obtained an antedated letter of license from Arthur, sanctioning the use of such materials. This last case was tried before Judge Montagu, a relative of the plaintiff, and Robertson, who was unable to substantiate his charges, received a severe handling from both judge and counsel for the prosecution. The latter declared that the charge made by Robertson "was as false as if the Father of Lies himself had come up from the bottomless abyss, and communicated it to the *True Colonist*" (55). The judge, in sentencing him to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of £50, used the most vigorous language. The libel was "false as hell," the editor was "the tool of a miserable party of agitated disturbers"; he was prostrating his intellect "in so debased, detestable, and abominable a service," and was publishing articles which were "a pest even to Botany Bay" (56).

Robertson, in his confinement in gaol, was soon joined by Melville, who was sentenced in November, 1835, to twelve months' imprisonment, £200 fine, and ordered to find securities to the extent of £500 for his future good behaviour. Melville's offence was contempt of court, he having commented on the judge, jury, witnesses, and sentence, in a very discreditable trial for cattle-stealing (57). Melville spent his time in prison writing a most unflattering history of Arthur's regime, in which he pleaded for land reform, the stoppage of transportation, representative government, etc. When Christmas, 1835, came round, the Governor graciously liberated Robertson, and on the 29th December set Melville free (58). Arthur accompanied his liberation of Melville with the expressed hope that the release "will lead you in future, by the influence of a better motive than fear of punishment, to abstain from a system of detraction which is not more injurious to the interests of your own family than it is subversive of all peace and order, and ruinous to the welfare of society." This hope of journalistic reform was doomed to disappointment, for both editors at once recommenced their bitter attacks, Robertson especially distinguishing himself by his wild and usually unfounded assertions.

After twelve years of service Arthur was recalled in 1836. On May 27 and 28 of that year, the papers were full of the news. The Radical press went into hysterics of joy and called upon every resource of type to announce the welcome fact. The *True Colonist* burst out in the following strain:—"Never has it fallen to our lot to communicate such welcome intelligence. . . . He (Arthur) will be wafted from these shores by the curses of many a broken-hearted parent, and many a destitute child, which owe their misery to the foolish and wicked system of misgovernment by which the colony has been ruined, and the vindictive system of persecution by which the prospects and characters of individuals were ruined. . . . He was the father of usury—the patron of falsehood, hypocrisy, and deceit—the protector of perjury, and the rewarder of perjurers." Robertson also in June (59) urged the public to refuse to support a fund which was being organised for the purpose of presenting Arthur with a piece of plate. "Yes, colonists," he concluded, "present Col. Arthur with a piece of plate, but let it be symbolical of (the colony's) present state—let it be a shivered fragment of crockery, and tell Col. Arthur that as the fragments can never be united, so has he dissevered society, and caused the colonists to be without union, save in one important point, and that is in thanking His Majesty for the mercy he has

manifested in the recall of Col. Arthur." When Arthur sailed, Robertson and a few of his fellow Radicals illuminated their houses in honour of the event, and persuaded a number of men and boys to let off fireworks in the street. The police intervened, and in the Police Court proceedings of the following day it was announced that Robertson had been arrested with his pockets full of crackers (60).

From such expressions of party hatred it is a relief to turn to the *Hobart Town Courier* (of which Ross was still editor), and the other papers which had supported Arthur's rule. Here we find nothing but praise of the administration, and sincere regret when Arthur was recalled. "Governor Arthur has made the colony," says Ross (61), and the long list of actual achievements shows that, in spite of many blunders, and a haughty manner, Arthur had been responsible for much real progress in the colony. If this was so, how then is one to explain the tirades of Melville and the Radicals? The explanation is that the press was conducted on strict party lines, perhaps even more so than to-day. The Radicals were the Opposition, an Opposition which had no power to voice its opinions in a Legislature composed entirely of the Governor's nominees. The only available channel for criticism or suggestions was, therefore, the press. But Arthur was an autocrat, who took no regard of the advice showered upon him, a fact which exasperated the Radicals to a great degree. Further, the settlement was isolated; news from the outside world filtered in only about once a month. The newspapers were, therefore, driven to fill their columns with local matter, and as this was difficult to accomplish, they sought refuge in virulent attacks on the Governor, who so completely disregarded their few just grievances. The journalistic conscience was practically non-existent; the laws of evidence were apparently unknown; the colonists must have value for their money. Therefore, the line of least resistance was to attack the administration, with a violence such as we have seen on several occasions above. Having gained a certain measure of liberty in 1828, the journalists drew no line between liberty and license, and their tactics were frequently nauseating. Arthur, after his initial attack of hyper-sensitiveness in 1824-5, learnt to ignore the constant jibes at himself and his subordinates, knowing full well that the Radicals would defeat their own ends by their unwise methods. Only when some accusation became too offensive did he seek the aid of the law, and on such occasions he was always sure that a military jury, or a specially chosen civil jury, could be relied upon to give a satisfactory verdict. It is an unpleasant story, and

Arthur cannot be excused at times of a certain vindictiveness in his actions, and of a wilful deafness to the demands of the more democratic free settlers. But the blame was not all on one side, and until Robertson and the rest had learnt the value of truth and moderation, such conflicts as have been described in this paper were inevitable.

With the arrival of Sir John Franklin, a more reasonable atmosphere was created, and the Radical press lost some of its venom. Melville occasionally figured in libel cases, the plaintiffs being private citizens, but the rancour of 1834-6 was gone forever. Meanwhile the *Hobart Town Courier* had passed in 1837 into the hands of Mr. Elliston, Master of the Longford Academy (62), who combined a gentle flattery of the Governor with eloquent educational articles, some of which urged the need for a University in the island. The idea of a University had been conceived some ten years earlier, but nothing had been done. Elliston now took up his pen to revive the demand, and in several splendid articles he pleaded for a University, no matter how small. Such an institution, he urged, would attract those who otherwise would go from Australia and India to England; it would produce good doctors and teachers; and "finally, by providing instruction in the higher departments of literature, independently of a professional kind, that character would be given to the wealthier classes of the colonists without which rank is intolerable, and the influence of wealth pernicious" (63). Perhaps also the University might have had a beneficial effect on journalists, and hastened the day when the oft-used phrase, "the licentiousness of the press," would be meaningless. That day came slowly, as the press began to realise a deeper sense of moral responsibility, and, as journalists, assured of liberty of speech, laid down as their ideal, "The truth, the whole truth (unless it hurts our case), and as little as possible beside the truth."

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. *Teetotal Advocate*, 1842.
2. *The Irish Exile*, 1850-1.
3. See Fenton, "History of Tasmania" (1884), p. 41.
4. *Hobart Town Gazette*, January 7, 1825.

5. The copies consulted for this paper are those in the keeping of the Hon. the Chief Secretary, to whom, and to whose staff, the writer wishes to express his thanks for the facilities rendered him in preparing this paper.
6. *H.T.G.*, June 8, 1816.
7. *H.T.G.*, October 19, 1816.
8. *H.T.G.*, November 30 and December 14, 1816.
9. *H.T.G.*, April 26, 1817.
10. *H.T.G.*, October 19, 1816.
11. *H.T.G.*, December 7, 1816.
12. *H.T.G.*, June 15, 1816.
13. *H.T.G.*, June 29, 1816.
14. It was estimated that in 1826, 1,000 gals. of rum were consumed weekly by a population of a little over 12,000. See *Hobart Town Courier*, November 18, 1836.
15. "A History of the Island of Van Diemen's Land from the year 1824 to 1836 inclusive; to which is added A Few Words on Prison Discipline"; printed at the office of Henry Melville, Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, 1835, p. 131.
16. *H.T.G.*, January 30, 1824.
17. *H.T.G.*, January 2, 1824.
18. *H.T.G.*, May 17, 1823.
19. *H.T.G.*, June 28, 1823.
20. *H.T.G.*, passim. See especially August 10, 1816, and ordinance regulating bread trade, July 6, 1816.
21. *H.T.G.*, June 15, 1816, and April 12, 1817.
22. *H.T.G.*, April 25, 1821.
23. *H.T.G.*, July 12, 1819.
24. *H.T.G.*, January 27, 1821.
25. *H.T.G.*, April 14, 1821.
26. *H.T.G.*, February 27, 1824.
27. *H.T.G.*, January 2, 1824.
28. See evidence in trial, *King v. Bent.*, *H.T.G.*, July 30, 1825; also *Colonial Times*, April 15, 1826.
29. *H.T.G.*, June 4, 1824, and subsequent issues.
30. *H.T.G.*, January 14, 1825. See also comment in *Gazette*, January 21, 1825:—"The Angler would fish in troubled waters, but we will not let him."
31. See evidence in trials, July, 1825, and April, 1826.
32. See letters, July 30, September 3, 1824; January 28, February 25, April 22, 1825.

33. *H.T.G.*, April 22, 1825.
34. *H.T.G.*, May 27, 1825.
35. See annual statements of accounts before and after 1825.
36. Ross acted as editor, and for the rest of Arthur's regime was his most stalwart supporter.
37. *H.T.G.*, June 27, 1825.
38. *H.T.G.*, editorial of October 8, 1824.
39. *H.T.G.*, February 11, 1825.
40. *H.T.G.*, April 8, 1826.
41. *H.T.G.*, July 1, July 30, 1825; April 1, April 22, May 20, May 27, 1826. Also *Colonial Times*, especially April 15, 1826.
42. *Colonial Times*, August 4, 1826.
43. *Colonial Times*, July 28, 1826.
44. *H.T.G.*, February 17, 1827.
45. *H.T.G.*, November 28, 1825.
46. *H.T.G.*, December 19, 1825.
47. Fenton, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8.
48. Both Acts are printed in full in the *Gazette*, September 22, 1827.
49. The duty was soon reduced to twopence.
50. Melville, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
51. Melville, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
52. *Hobart Town Courier*, January 22, 1836.
53. These facts are obtained from a collection of cuttings from various Australian papers, which are pasted in the front of the Chief Secretary's copy of the first volume of the *H.T.G.*
54. In his History, referred to above, Melville deals with the whole question of land tenure. Here he urges that the whole revenue of the colony should be raised by a land tax or quit-rent; customs, stamp duties, and other existing forms of taxation could then be abolished. Further, he suggests that in a land tax unimproved land "should be more severely taxed than the soil on which labour and capital have been expended; the former has been almost useless to society, whilst the latter has assisted in the maintenance of the inhabitants," pp. 151 et seq.
55. *H.T. Courier*, July 7, 1835.
56. For the facts of these four cases, see Melville, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-203. Also *H.T. Courier*, March 9, April 7, May 5, July 7 and 8, 1835.

57. Melville, *op. cit.*, p. 230. Also *H.T. Courier*, November 6, 1835.
58. *H.T. Courier*, December 25, 1835. Also January 1, 1836.
59. Quoted by *H.T. Courier*, June 10, 1836.
60. *H.T. Courier*, October 31, 1836.
61. *H.T. Courier*, May 27, 1836.
62. *H.T. Courier*, December 9, 1836.
63. *H.T. Courier*, March 24, 1837; also June 23, 1837.