

posters proclaimed passages for this country and Australia. Since that time these far off colonies have steadily advanced. Still, they were more sure than rapid in their movements. In 1835 South Australia was proclaimed, and its town, Adelaide, founded. But the entire population of this new colony did not ten years afterwards, exceed twenty thousand. New Zealand in those days drew aside many who, otherwise, would have gone to some part of Australia. In 1846, however, gold was discovered, and this fact becoming fully known, roused the energies of men on the spot, and so excited men at a distance, that in three or four years, thousands from all parts of the earth were hurrying to a country where this metal lay on the ground, and as was imagined by too many, could be got for the lifting. The colonies at present existing are those of Victoria, Western Australia, Southern Australia and New South Wales. We learn that a fifth, to be styled Northern Australia, is at present being formed out of the Moreton Bay portion. Thus if we reckon Van Dieman's Land, there are now six provinces in that portion of the world with a population of nearly a million.

The wealth of Australia is thus exhibited by the *Times* :—

"About a hundred years ago the most richly-laden vessels in the world were those sailing between Acapulco and Manila, and when the war with Spain broke out the one great object of the English squadron was to capture a galleon. Month after month did Anson and his ships lie in wait for these prizes, and when at last, after tedious cruises and numerous disappointments, one of them was secured, it was thought an ample recompense for all trouble because it contained a million and a half of dollars. At the present time a fleet of forty of these galleons, each as well stored as Anson's prize, would hardly serve to bring home the riches in gold only which are sent from Australia to England in a single year. Converting all these treasures, for comparison's sake, into old Scotch currency, we may say that a vessel as rich as a Manila galleon, arrives nearly every week, and the fact finds its place in our columns as one of only ordinary importance."

Its political consequence, too, cannot be overrated, and is in a fair way of becoming greater. We see that it is resolved on to have a "Federal Union" of all the colonies. So long ago as 1849, the Privy Council of New South Wales had a Committee, which recommended to her Majesty that she should appoint a Governor General of Australia, "with authority to convene a body, to be called the General Assembly of Australia, at any time and place within your Majesty's Australian dominions which he may see fit." In 1853, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council reported that "the establishment at once of a General Assembly to make laws in relation to the inter-colonial questions that have arisen, or may hereafter arise, is indispensable." And in 1857, "the General Association for the Australian Colonies," by an agent in London, memorialized the Colonial Secretary "to bring in a bill into Parliament, enabling any two or more of the Australian Colonies to take steps towards forming a convention, with power to create a Federal Assembly, and to define, as far as possible, the various subjects to which this federal action should extend. Mr. Labouchere's answer was in effect that, any measure for this object must originate with those colonies themselves. Within a few months, a Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria has reported in favour of the necessity of a Federal Union, and has requested all the colonies, Tasmania included, to send three delegates a-piece to confer, in order to "frame a plan of federation, to be afterwards submitted for approval, either to the Colonial Legislatures, or directly to the people, or to both, as may be determined, and to receive such further Legislative sanction as may appear necessary." And, still more recently, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council of New South Wales has wished to sustain the course adopted by the Victoria Committee. Nine years have elapsed since Federal unity was first contemplated, and now it seems in a fair way of being achieved.

The functions of the proposed Union are to be as follows:—

- "1.—Inter-colonial tariffs, and coasting trade.
- "2.—Railways, roads, canals, &c., running through any two of the colonies.
- "3.—Beacons and lighthouses on the coast.
- "4.—Inter-colonial penal settlements.
- "5.—Inter-colonial gold regulations.
- "6.—Postage between the said colonies.
- "7.—A general Court of Appeal from the courts of such colonies.
- "8.—A power to legislate on all other subjects which may be submitted to them by addresses from the Legislative Councils and Assemblies of the other colonies; and to appropriate to any of the above objects the necessary sums of money, to be raised by a per centage on the revenues of all the colonies interested."

They are the best judges in their own affairs, and we give these momentous facts without pronouncing upon them in any way. All we can say is, that Australia bids fair to become at no far off day, a stupendous colony and federation which, under the fostering wing of Britain, will go onwards in prosperity, adding to the power of the Empire, and to the wealth, civilization and Christianity of the world.

Dating her real progress from 1847-8, one is lost in astonishment; and knowing that the gold yield is abundant as ever, we can set no limits to her greatness. If the colonies of our Empire prosper for fifty years longer, as they have done for twenty-five years past, the face of the earth will be changed and mankind will own the sway of races which shall speak our tongue, obey our laws, cultivate our letters, and fear our God.—*Globe*.

8. EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

A correspondent in Australia, under date of January 11th, thus speaks of the progress of education in Australia:—Another very important measure, which has passed the second reading and has been committed, is an Education Bill. Hitherto we have had two systems at work, managed by two Boards, with a double machinery of secretaries, clerks, and inspectors—namely, the Denominational and the National or Secular system. In the schools under the Denominational Board religious instruction is mingled with secular teaching in any way and to any extent desired by the several denominations. In the National schools four hours of secular instruction are required, but certain hours are set apart during which the priest or minister or religious teachers approved by the parents have access to the children of their respective persuasions. The new Bill seeks to bring the whole under one board and to make the whole of the public schools of the country approach more nearly to the National system than they do at present. There is also what is called a compulsory clause; but it does not go to the extent of the Prussian system, which enables a policeman to catch a boy and take him—not to a police court as a "rogue and vagabond," but to a school. It merely adds the gentle pressure of an increased rate upon the parent who neglects or refuses to send his child to school. This Bill passed the second reading by a majority of 33 to 11. It is chiefly opposed by the Roman Catholic members in the House and by the priests out of it; but the lay members of that Church are not unanimous. Some persons are sanguine enough to suppose that the Bill can be so modified, without materially impairing it, as to obviate or soften the opposition of the priests and their followers, but I have no such hope. They will accept nothing but the unalloyed Denominational system. They state that it is an essential article of their religion that religious services should pervade secular instruction, and that it is contrary to their religion to separate secular instruction from devotional practices. But I believe the Bill may be made satisfactory to a great number of Roman Catholic parents. We have a large National Training School in Melbourne, with 714 scholars at the last report. The Roman Catholic bishop and clergy withhold their sanction from it, and yet it numbers 131 Catholic scholars. According to the proportions exhibited by the census returns, the number of children of the Roman Catholic faith should be rather under 180; that the school numbers as many as 131 shows how small has been the influence of the withholding of the bishop and clergy's countenance. [See also page 77.]

4. POPULATION OF FRANCE.

The rate of increase of the population of France is known to have been extremely slow ever since an accurate account has been taken of it. It is certain that in the thirty-seven years which elapsed from 1817 to 1852 the mean annual increase of the population of France was only 155,929; but from 1846 to 1851 this increase had fallen to 76,000 per annum; and from 1851 to 1856 to 51,200. * * * Before the beginning of the revolutionary war the whole population of the country was estimated by the National Assembly at twenty-six millions; so that in more than sixty years the total increase has been under fifty per cent. In 1806 it may be taken at twenty-nine millions; in 1820 at thirty millions; this slender increase of one million in fourteen years being accounted for by the frightful consumption of human life in the last ten years of the war. The progress in the next twenty years was more rapid, for it had risen in 1841 to thirty-four millions and a quarter; but from that time to the present the augmentation has been almost insensible.—*Edinburgh Review*.

5. EDUCATION IN FRANCE.

A late report of the Minister states that, public instruction is being developed and free education promoted. The number of colleges has been largely increased. Education has become more moral and religious, with a tendency toward sound humanities and useful sciences. The college of France has been re-organized; elementary instruction is spreading far.

The budget of 1858 provides for better payment for teachers and professors, and for magistrates. I may point out an increase of charitable societies—in the country those of the medical corporations, and in the towns the establishment of soup-kitchens. One million has been distributed in relief of the populations which have suffered most from want of work.