

Perhaps the suggestion of Major Elford for keeping the country uninhabited, if the most ludicrous, would have proved the most effective :

“ That they allow no women to land in the Island, and that means should be adopted to remove those that were there.”

(II.) The tardy and imperfect organization of courts of justice is at once an indication and a result of this adverse influence. The first instance of a formal and authorized tribunal occurs in 1615, when Sir Richard Whitbourne was sent out to hold courts of Vice-Admiralty. That the system so established was primitive and non-effective, was proved by the breaking out of former disorders soon after his courts had been held. The notorious “ Fishing Admiral” system was first legally authorized in the reign of Charles I, (1633).

By this system the master of the first fishing vessel entering a harbour was constituted its admiral and arbitrary judge for the season, while the master of that which entered next became its vice-admiral. This most anomalous system of judicature was manifestly detrimental to the interests of the permanent settlers, and judging from the manner in which it is still spoken of by the “ planters,” it has been handed down to memory as meriting hatred similar to that which attaches to the Cromwellian occupation of Ireland.