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With best regards, I am,  
Yours truly,

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## Crumbs From the Past

By Terra Nova

We are under the impression that of all seasons, the Winter season is the best suited for contemplation on the past, so we have adopted for our theme, some reminiscences of the days when our forefathers were treading this terrestrial sphere, the days before the electric light, the railway carriage, the automobile, and the five-cent dude were known. To the readers of the *Mail and Advocate* the "Crumbs from the Past," which we will impart to them, will, we have no doubt, be of service in teaching them many things they may not have been aware of before.

We will at first, begin in the days prior to the coming of a local form of Government when it was a crime to till the land or to build even a pig-stye, as the late Hon. Charles Fox Bennett remarked many years ago at a meeting of the Agricultural Society. There have been many writers now and then indulging in the publication of items of local antiquity, which have been most interesting, and to a layman, maybe these items may have been the principal ones in connection with our history, but it is not so. No net catches all the fish and before we are finished we hope to make this assertion a bona fide one. Now then let us, as we stated, begin in the days anterior to the blessings of a local government. Thieves were banished from the country, and those who were not received very harsh treatment. It is on record that a man who had held up and robbed another on the streets of St. John's, was sentenced to be hanged, the Governor granted him a reprieve, he was banished to New South Wales. There is an account of a person having been proven guilty of stealing cabbage, being made pay their value to the owner, and to "walk round the town, guarded by constables, with cabbage tied around his neck." The stocks were then in use, and we have read of instances in which culprits were confined in those instruments of torture. The late Judge Pinsent, a very clever lawyer and judge in his day, and a native of the old historic district of Port de Grave, relates many cases of punishment meted out to criminals in those old days. He says in one of his articles entitled, "Curiosities from the Surrogate Records": "The fashions of the Old Country, I see, were so far observed that not only the knee breeches, shoes and buckles of the time were the accustomed attire, but the service of the Perruquier were in demand, for we find an agreement between James Jude, planter, of Hr. Grace, of the one part, and Luke McGrath, hairdresser and perrewer, maker of the same place, of the other part." The Judge then goes on to show the treatment accorded to law breakers, which notes are very interesting. He tells of one, Samuel Pinkham, a deserter from his master in Ferryland, and found thieving a Hr. Grace, was sentenced to receive forty lashes in two instalments and to be drawn through the harbor by a horse, and then confined in goal until he could be relegated to his master at Ferryland. Speaking of Bonavista, the judge says: "I observe a case in which a man, for supplying a prisoner with liquor through the cell window, is committed to the public stocks, and another, prior to the cat-o'-nine tails, is to parade around the settlement with a label on his back. We came across an interesting item in the records for 1797. It had to do with a sailor named William Brown, of His Majesty's ship "Romney." Brown stole some fish from the flake of one Roderick Robertson, a merchant of St. John's. The prisoner was led by a constable through the public street with a fish tied around his neck to denote his crime, and was sentenced to receive 29 lashes on the bare back. It appears that his health was impaired in such a way that he did not undergo the treatment of the at-

continued a few days, until they had spent the whole of the money in dissipation. After that one went to London and the other left for Newfoundland, where awful crime so played in his conscience that he surrendered himself to justice and made a voluntary confession.

In 1762 a man convicted of using a false key in the night and feloniously stealing a quantity of rum, was judged to be led to the gallows with a halter round his neck and from thence to the whipping post, there to be strip and receive on his bare back thirty-nine lashes. So much for the real ancient days. Now let us come down to a later date, even within the memory of some of those among us, and we will find that the cat-o-nine tails was in use, the late Judge Renouf, known as the "Gallant Major" having been major of one of the volunteer companies formed at St. John's in the sixties, asked from his place in the House of Assembly in 1866, how much money it had cost for the previous twelve months for whipping prisoners, being told that it was in the vicinity of \$1,000.00. He said that the best thing to do, and it would save such an enormous sum which could be devoted to some humane purpose, was to get a prisoner to flog the culprits.

In the early forties, there is an account of two men being banished for thievery. The father of one of the criminals died heart broken, his son was the oldest of the family, and was the father's only help.

In 1854 a man who had received a coal scuttle, stolen by some children from the firm of Hunter & Co., was banished for life.

Culprits to-day have a lot to be thankful for, as regards the treatment accorded them, the cup of "switchel" and the bowl of "burgee" and the quart of water and pint of salt have long been buried in the tomb of oblivion. The songs composed by prisoners on the severe hardships which they underwent have been forgotten. Very few can recall the verses in which the following lines occur:

"Tis early every mornin,  
From the pen we have to jog,  
From that to Signal Hill my boys,  
To root and turn up bog."

Like all things else, which have kept pace with our country's progress prisoners are now being made to think they are not beasts. That the words of Burns ring in clarion truth, when he says:

"Gently scan your brother man,  
And gentler sister woman,  
If they a ken to going wrong,  
To step aside is human."

We are hoping that the future may usher to us even better imprisonments for the unfortunate creatures, male and female, who fall into the pit of temptation, more especially for the youth, for whom we hope to see erected at no distant date, some suitable place, where they may be reformed and made to be able to go forward with an education and trade to take their part in Life's battle.

Of the many prelates who came to Newfoundland there was none more widely known and more highly respected than Bishop Fleming. By His Lordship's exertions the Cathedral was built. It would be ambiguity on my part to go into the many incidents in the life of the reverend Prelate, who toiled so unremittently and so laboriously both night and day, to create a monument everlasting, a credit to His Lordship's Love of the Faith, as it is to the men and women who had taken part in the helping of its construction. At Kelly's Island Bishop Fleming slept in a hut formed of the bark of trees, he dressed his own food, brought water from the spring in a little kettle, and only for his faithful dog, while sleeping in the hut, he would have been surrounded by rats, which infested the place. My meaning for explaining to the readers of the *Mail and Advocate* the work of Bishop Fleming is to convey to them the type of man he was, and to give them an idea of the state of Newfoundland as it existed before the Members of the Almighty had taken their places to labor in God's Vineyard among the residents of Terra Nova. In a letter written by His Lordship over seventy years ago, he said: "The Sacrament of Matrimony was administered by Constables, Magistrates and the women, applied to the children the names of heathen gods and goddesses. The feasts of the Church were dispensed by housekeepers or nurses, no House of Worship, Catholic against Catholic, Irishman against Irishman, an unfortunate struggle for the mastery of Limerick over Munster. Boys of six and seven years old got work on wharves and an allowance of grog was handed out to them. Mar-



Published by Authority

### Weights and Measures Act, 1916.

THE attention of the Public is drawn to the following extracts from "The Weights and Measures Act, 1916," viz:—

All packages such as cartons, kegs, boxes, crocks, tins, bags and bottles, containing articles exposed for sale in such packages in quantities of two ounces by weight or measure and upwards shall have the net weight or measure marked thereon.

The provisions of this Act whereby the vendors of goods are required to have the net weight of the contents of packages marked thereon shall come into force on the first day of January, nineteen hundred and seventeen.

J. R. BENNETT,  
Colonial Secretary.  
Dept. of Colonial Secretary,  
December 29th, 1916.  
dec30.31



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### READ THE MAIL & ADVOCATE

riages of the most improper kind took place. The records show some most daring instances of marriage. At Carbonear a man and woman were married by the servant of the groom. Education was at a low ebb in the beginning of the last century, the poor man had a small chance of having his son or daughter achieving an education worthy of the name. The outports were very much neglected. Bishop Field, the energetic and zealous prelate of the Church of England, writing to the press in England in 1844 said, "Money in many parts is scarcely known, all commerce being carried on by barter, even the payment for the school of children is often made in fish.

Our next article will deal with education and with other matters in relation to the past, which we hope to make even of more interest than this one.

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