

the ships of war had fired twenty-one guns each, which was repeated at noon, and answered by three volleys from the battalion of marines.

Nor were the officers alone partakers of the general relaxation. The four unhappy wretches labouring under sentence of banishment were freed from their fetters, to rejoin their former society; and three days given as holidays to every convict in the colony. Hospitality too, which ever acquires a double relish by being extended, was not forgotten on this occasion, when each prisoner, male and female, received an allowance of grog; and every non-commissioned officer and private soldier had the honour of drinking prosperity to his royal master, in a pint of porter, served out at the flag staff, in addition to the customary allowance of spirits. Bonfires concluded the evening, and I am happy to say, that excepting a single instance which shall be taken notice of hereafter, no bad consequence, or unpleasant remembrance, flowed from an indulgence so amply bestowed.

About this time an accident happened, which I record with much regret. The whole of our black cattle, consisting of five cows and a bull, either from not being properly secured, or from the negligence of those appointed to take care of them, strayed into the woods, and in spite of all the search we have been able to make, are not yet found. As a convict of the name of Corbet, who was accused of a theft, eloped nearly at the same time, it was at first believed, that he had taken the desperate measure of driving off the cattle, in order to subsist on them as long as possible; or perhaps to deliver them to the natives. In this uncertainty, parties to search were sent out in different directions; and the fugitive declared an outlaw, in case of not returning by a fixed day. After much anxiety and fatigue, those who had undertaken the task returned without finding the cattle: But on the 23<sup>d</sup> of the month, Corbet made his appearance near a farm belonging to the Governor, and entreated a convict, who happened to be on the spot, to give him some food, as he was perishing for hunger. The man applied to, under pretence of fetching what he asked for, went away and immediately gave the necessary information; in consequence of which, a party under arms was sent out and apprehended him. When the poor wretch was brought in, he was greatly emaciated, and almost famished; but on proper restoratives being administered, he was so far recovered by the 24<sup>th</sup>, as to be able to stand his trial, when he pleaded Guilty to the

robbery with which he stood charged, and received sentence of death. In the course of repeated examinations, it plainly appeared he was an utter stranger to the place where the cattle might be, and was in no shape concerned in having driven them off.

Samuel Peyton, convict, for having, on the evening of the King's birth-day, broke open an officer's marque, with an intent to commit robbery, of which he was fully convicted, had sentence of death passed on him at the same time as Corbet; and, on the following day they were both executed, confessing the justness of their fate, and imploring the forgiveness of those whom they had injured. Peyton, at the time of his suffering, was but twenty years of age, the greatest part of which had been invariably passed in the commission of crimes, that at length terminated in his ignominious end. The following letter, written by a fellow-convict to the sufferer's unhappy mother, I shall make no apology for presenting to the reader; it affords a melancholy proof that not the ignorant and untaught only have provoked the justice of their country to banish them to this remote region.

*Sydney Cove, Port Jackson,  
New-South Wales, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1788.*

My dear and honoured Mother!

WITH a heart oppressed by the keenest sense of anguish, and too much agitated by the idea of my very melancholy condition, to express my town sentiments, I have prevailed on the goodness of a compassionate friend, to do to me the last sad office of acquainting you with the dreadful fate that awaits me.

My dear Mother! with what agony of soul do I dedicate the few last moments of my life, to bid you an eternal adieu; my doom being irrevocably fixed, and ere this hour to-morrow I shall have quitted this vale of wretchedness, to enter into an unknown and endless eternity. I will not distress your tender maternal feelings by any long comment on the cause of my present misfortune. Let it therefore suffice to say, that impelled by that strong propensity to evil, which neither the virtuous precepts nor the example of the best of parents could eradicate, I have at length fallen an unhappy, though just, victim to my own follies.

Too late I regret my inattention to your admonitions, and feel myself sensibly affected by the remembrance of the many anxious moments you have passed on my account. For these, and all my other transgressions, however great, I supplicate