

and character, and alike based upon the principles of the English constitution. The chief difference appeared in the organization of the second chamber, which, in New South Wales, was a nominated body, while in the other three colonies the liberal or democratic party was successful in its efforts to secure an elective upper house. By these acts, which were subsequently ratified by the imperial parliament,¹ in order to give them legal effect, the fullest measure of self-government compatible with imperial supremacy, was granted to the colonies. They had at last obtained the boon of free constitutions for which they had been long striving, as the Colonial Office surrendered all control over their domestic affairs into the hands of the provincial legislatures. The introduction of the system of responsible government at the same time, or soon after,² was the crowning measure of colonial autonomy by which the colonies were made the masters of their own destinies. These constitutions are the basis of the present free and liberal governments of the several colonies, and so well have they served their purpose, that but few modifications, and these of a minor character, have been introduced into them during the course of the ensuing half century.

We must now retrace our steps in order to direct attention for a moment to the history of the new settlements, the growth of which materially affected the territorial jurisdiction of New South Wales by the erection of a group of independent colonies within her original boundary. We have already alluded to the unwieldy extent of the newly formed colony. One of the first acts of Governor Phillip was the despatch of a party of occupation to Norfolk Island, for the purpose of establishing a branch colony. With the increase in the number of convicts, the population began to spread out beyond the immediate confines of Port Jackson. A little band of soldiers and prisoners from Sydney succeeded in planting a settlement in Van Dieman's Land in 1803.³ With the gradual growth in its numbers, the difficulty of administering from Sydney the affairs of the distant and isolated offshoot, so much increased that, by an act

¹Quick and Garran, *Annot. Const. of Aust.*, p. 44.

²See *Ibid.*, p. 44, &c., for the discussion of the question as to whether the grant of responsible government was the result of a despatch of the Secretary for the Colonies, or whether according to Chief Justice Higinbotham it was statutory in origin and character.

³Flanagan, *Hist. of N.S.W.*, vol. 1, p. 132.