

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

— No. 5. —

(No. 47.)

No. 5.

EXTRACT of a DESPATCH from Sir *John Franklin* to Lord *Glenelg*; dated Van Diemen's Land, Government House, 12 April 1827.

Sir *John Franklin*
to Lord *Glenelg*.

THERE seems to me to have existed a considerable misapprehension in the minds of the Emigration Committee as to the real wants of the colony, and its means of providing for free emigrants; so that its operations have been founded on a wrong principle, as well as apparently conducted, in some quarter or other, with bad faith.

This colony has been considered, in its general character, to resemble New South Wales, than which there cannot be a greater mistake. New South Wales has a vast outlet for a new population; this colony has scarcely any now remaining. New South Wales is rich; this colony can scarcely meet its current expenditure. New South Wales, from its great population, and the secluded character of its principal districts, has a number of interior townships, all rapidly increasing, and requiring especially mechanical labour; this colony has scarcely any, excepting the two capitals, Hobart Town and Launceston, and its demand is accordingly more limited, even in proportion. There is also another distinction to which I scarcely know how to advert, but which causes a great difference between the two colonies, as regards the introduction of free emigrants. The convict system seems to have been carried out with greater rigor here than, as far as I can learn, it has been in New South Wales; and one effect of this, a most important one in relation to the interests of free emigrants, is, that the labouring population is thus habitually distributed here under the roofs of individual masters, and the growth of villages in the interior, and the construction of small cottages, unless in the immediate vicinity of the principal towns, have been proportionally prevented. There is thus no existing accommodation for free emigrants with large families in the interior of this colony; and masters are unwilling even to take them into their service if so encumbered. Lastly, the necessaries of life are very dear here; while, in New South Wales, they are comparatively cheap; and children, whose maintenance would neither be felt nor objected to, were they lodged in separate cottages, with abundant means of subsistence about them, and who would thus also be in a good school for their own future growth and improvement, are rejected altogether here; where, if required at all, they must be brought close to a proprietor, maintained at great expense, lodged under one roof, and subject to all the contamination of such accommodation. These statements, then, will probably satisfy your Lordship, that there is a great mistake even in the object contemplated by the Emigrant Committee in their late exportations; and that thus, perhaps, no pursuit of it, however otherwise unexceptionable, could have given satisfaction.

Married men, with large helpless families, cannot at present be received here at all; and to illustrate the extent to which this exists, I may mention that a young man who came out with myself, and in whom I took considerable interest, from his excellent recommendations and good conduct on board ship, had the greatest difficulty in obtaining an engagement, not because he had a family, but because having a young wife he possibly might have one.