

this, in conjunction with the other influences at which I have hinted, is thinning their numbers and hastening their general decay.

Such is a faint and imperfect sketch of the present condition of the aborigines of Australia. The question now suggests itself, are they improvable? Do they possess the faculties and capabilities of men, or is it really true that they are a kindred race to the orang outang? On this subject I have formed a very decided opinion,—an opinion held, I am happy to say, by most of the more sensible of the colonists.—They are susceptible of cultivation. I do not consider them by any means so discouraging or so forbidding materials as the Hottentots and Borjesmen, on whom the experiment has been successfully tried. Many of the men are really good-looking specimens of human nature, with foreheads and eyes that betoken intelligence of no common order. I am not a professed phrenologist, but I feel confident that many a New Hollander's head presents more favorable indications than do those of the generality of the sons of Europe. They have memories accurate and retentive,—powers of imitation remarkably great. They can draw inferences with striking shrewdness and acuteness. There are not wanting evidences of the strength of their gratitude and the warmth of their affections. In short, they give sure proof of their possession of all the powers of our common nature; I need not say how fully they evidence its deep depravity. For the amelioration of their condition, it is unnecessary for me in addressing you, Dear Sir, to say that christianity is the engine that must be employed. Perhaps you will bear with me while I advert to some of those peculiarities in their circumstances which will modify the manner in which this engine is to be applied. They are essentially, many have said irrevocably, (cratic, literally vagabonds on the earth. They wander, sometimes in whole tribes, sometimes in small detachments, sometimes in single families; sometimes an isolated savage roams the wilderness solitary and sullen. This migratory propensity cannot, it is obvious, be eradicated at once; probably, in the present generation of adults, it can never be more than imperfectly restrained. It may, however, be greatly counteracted.

And here I cannot but observe, that the present state of the aborigines of Port Philip affords a fine illustration of that beautiful feature of the Divine economy, whereby good is educated from evil,—whereby the wrath and other sinful passions of man are made to praise the Lord. The measures which the christian feels to have been all along desirable for the sake of the blacks, are now felt by every one to be necessary for the sake of the whites. Aboriginal aggression is a constant subject of complaint. A few days ago a meeting was held at Geelong on the subject; and an energetic memorial to the Governor was agreed on. In

this document it was recommended, that suitable portions of land should be reserved within the territorial limits of the certain tribes; that depots should be formed therein, for supplying the natives with food and clothing; and it is gratifying to add, a decided opinion was expressed, that christian instruction, by missionaries taking a deep interest in their temporal and eternal welfare, forms the only means of civilizing them. The duty of supporting the original occupants of the soil, was urged upon the government by the consideration, that the presence of the colonists abridges their means of subsistence, while it affords an immense revenue to the crown, which has seized their lands, and has never, as yet, offered those who formerly possessed them any thing in the shape of an equivalent. Some such measures as those just mentioned must be soon adopted, otherwise the extinction of the aboriginal race is inevitable. Our sheep and cattle have driven away their game and eaten up their roots.—They cannot therefore obtain their finer articles of food. They cannot retreat to the regions of the interior, into which Britons have not yet intruded, for these are occupied by hostile tribes. From these causes, as also, no doubt, from the superior attractions of flour and mutton, they are led sometimes to beg, sometimes to steal from the stores and folds of the settlers. A criminal commerce, in the meantime goes on with the shepherds and others, of a nature too well understood to need minute specification; and the whole frequently terminates in bloodshed. For the sake, therefore, of both races, it is desirable that the blacks should be fed, and that in such a manner as will do away with all occasion for intercourse between them and the whites.

It is now easily seen that, if the plan above sketched be adopted, either by the Government or Missionary Societies, or by the combined efforts of both, an immediate arrest is put on the locomotiveness of the aborigines, and thus the great barrier between them and the efforts of the messenger of peace is broken down.—They can now be subjected to the influences of that glorious gospel which its Divine Author commanded to be preached unto all nations.—From what I have said, some provision for supplying them with food must enter into every scheme for aboriginal instruction. The expense of this would, however, be much less than might at first sight be imagined. A large field of potatoes, a garden well stocked with vegetables, with perhaps the addition of a small flock of sheep, would form the chief part of what is necessary for a whole tribe. In a short time an establishment of this sort would do much towards its own support. Nothing should be given to the natives except in the shape of reward for service performed. Experience fully proves that they will work most diligently for a time, either when influenced by their own caprice, or by very slight induce-