ly as good as lobsters, oysters, good and plentiful, eels, skate, and shrimps. Some years ago mackarel, of a very small species, were caught, but they have since disappeared. Black-fish are plentiful in the Mersey, and generally weigh from five to fifteen pounds; they have no scales. The in­terior rivers and lakes abound with very fine eels, but, ex­cept the mullet, they are of little value. The toad-fish, found in the bays and shores of the island, is a strong poison. This poison is of a powerful sedative nature, producing stupor, and acting on the nervous system. The black whale re­sorts during the breeding season to the deep estuaries of rivers, and to the bays and inlets around the island. This fishery is pursued with great activity and success. There are several kinds of snakes, some of them poisonous ; the most common one a large black snake, the diamond snake, and a smaller brown sort. In the reptile family may be classed the guanas and lizards, said to be harmless ; cen­tipedes of two sorts, scorpions and tarantulas, the latter often met with in rotten wood. There are many curious and beautiful varieties of the beetle ; three or four sorts, some of which are an inch long, and sting sharply. The wild bee is found, and a variety of spiders. All the domes­tic animals of Europe thrive, and increase in size.

The population here, as in New South Wales, consists of three classes, the aborigines, the convicts, and the free inhabitants. The aborigines, or blacks, more resemble in their countenance and appearance the African negro than those of New South Wales, though living under a colder climate. Their hair is woollyand their complexion black, and they are said to be inferior in ingenuity, as well as in mus­cular strength. For several years an inveterate hostility pre­vailed between them and the civilized inhabitants ; and the defenceless farmers and stock-keepers were often murdered by the natives. These outrages at last roused the spirit of the whole country ; and the troops, and all those that were capable of bearing arms, formed a cordon round the aborigines, with the intention of confining them in the peninsula called Tasman’s Head, where all their wants were to be supplied, and an attempt was to be made to civilize them. They however broke through this cordon like so many wild beasts ; but by the humane exertions of some of the settlers, aided by a few of the more civilized abori­gines of Sydney, they have been removed to Flinders Island, in Bass’s straits, where they are clothed and fed, and attempts are made to civilize them. Their numberdoes not exceed 300, and, as usually happens with savages when they are brought within the bounds of civilization, they are gradually decaying.

The convicts amount to 12,000. Every convict who is transported to Van Diemen’s Land, without any reference to previous circumstances, is either placed in the public service or is assigned to individuals immediately on landing. The first are compelled to devote their whole time to the service of the crown, and receive in return food, lodging, and clothes. Labourers and mechanics reside in barracks built for the purpose ; clerks employed in the public offices are permitted to live elsewhere, and receive a small pittance ; those who are assigned to individuals are still under the closest surveillance, and can go nowhere without a pass. The convict prisoners are divided into classes: 1. Such labourers or mechanics as, on account of especial good con­duct, are permitted to sleep out of the barracks, and to work for themselves the whole of each Saturday. 2. Those who still lodge in the barracks, but who are allowed to work for themselves the whole of each Saturday. 3. Those who are employed on the public works, and are released from work every Saturday at noon. 4. Refractory or dis­orderly characters, worked in irons for crimes committed in the country, under a sentence of the magistrate. 5. Men of the most degraded and incorrigible character, worked in irons under the sentence of a magistrate, and kept entirely separate from the other prisoners. 6. Men removed for crimes to penal settlements, which are distant stations under the governments of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land, where none but prisoners and their guards are allow­ed to remain, and where the former are kept to unremitting labour. The rewards to prisoners for good conduct consist of tickets of leave, which exempt the holder from compul­sory labour, and emancipations, which restore freedom, but without permission to leave the country.

The free population ranges between 15,000 and 20,000. The following is an account of the population from a recent census:—Free persons, 20,686; convict ditto, 11,938; Port Arthur, 1137 ; Flinders’ Island (black and white), 183; other islands, 50; military (with wives,&c.), 1054. Total, 35,250. The number of emigrants that embarked from the united kingdom to this colony in 1839 only amounted to 328; while those to Sydney amounted to 8455.@@1

The supreme authority is vested in a lieutenant-governor and executive council, consisting of the lieutenant-governor, chief-justice, colonial secretary, treasurer, chaplain, attorney-general, and collector of customs, together with eight pri­vate gentlemen of the colony, nominated by the crown for life. The governor, with the concurrence of at least two- thirds of the council, possesses the power of making laws, if not repugnant to the laws of England. He, along with the council, may also impose taxes for local purposes. The laws are administered by a supreme court, consisting of a chief-justice and one puisne judge. It is a civil and crimi­nal court. Appeals may be made from its decisions in civil cases, only when the matter exceeds L.1000 in value, and then direct to the king in council. Either judge may hold a court of circuit in different parts of the colony, for the trial of offences, or for civil actions.

Van Diemen’s Land was originally divided into two coun­ties, those of Buckingham and Cornwall. These indeed con­tinue to be its only counties, although in 1826 it was divid­ed into nineteen police districts. Orders were then re­ceived from the home government for forming this colony into counties, hundreds, and parishes, in the same manner as England. Each of these districts is under the charge of a public magistrate, and a chief and other constables, to whose exertions thé good order of the colony is mainly in­debted.

The clergy of the church of England consist of a rural dcan, one senior, and seven junior chaplains. Van Diemen’s Land is included in the diocese of Australia. There are three Presbyterian ministers, one Independent, one Wesleyan ; and one Roman Catholic priest, all paid by the government. The income of the senior chaplain at Hobart-Town is esti­mated at L.1000 a-year, arising from the glebe, fees, &c. Education is well attended to by the government, which sup­ports the King’s Orphan Schools, one for male and another for female children, and seventeen elementary schools through­out the colony. The king’s schools are for those who are en­tirely destitute, or who have one parent living, or whose parents, though both alive, have not the means of giving their children education ; and, lastly, for those who are able to contribute annually the sum of L.12. There are besides numerous private seminaries throughout the colony, where all the elementary branches of education are taught. The press is free, and being neither restrained by stamp duties nor taxes on the paper, is conducted with ability and spirit. There are no less than eight newspapers published at Hobart-Town, and two at Launceston, besides monthly magazines, annuals, and almanacks. Various religious, be­nevolent, and literary institutions are established, which contribute to the improvement of morals, as well as to the diffusion of knowledge.

The public revenue is derived from customs, duties, ex­cise, fees, sale of land, quit-rents, &c. A duty of five per

@@@1 See Parliamentary Papers for the year 1840; copy of any Genera] Return of Emigration for the year 1839.