

and during the whole of his administration, which lasted till 1806, provisions continued to be imported into the colony at the expense of the home government, principally from the Cape of Good Hope and Batavia.

The military were gradually acquiring more power, and their officers generally set the laws at defiance, assuming the right of landing spirits from every vessel that arrived. Governor King endeavoured to put a stop to this practice; but the military, who had become powerful and influential, overawed him. In an evil hour, hoping to check their power and influence, he gave licenses not only to the constables, but to the jailer, to sell rum; and the latter, it is said, was allowed to keep a public tap-room opposite the jail door.

In consequence of this state of things, the Governor's power was very much weakened, if not entirely destroyed, and the whole settlement was thrown into confusion. The convicts were under no efficient control, and bands of them, under the name of Bush-rangers,\* traversed the country, and entered the houses of the settlers even in the open day, committing the most fearful atrocities. Anarchy and confusion reigned every where.

The Castle Hill convicts now mutinied, but were overcome, and some of them executed.

Captain Bligh, R. N. (who had commanded the *Bounty*), succeeded Captain King. During his administration, *rum* was the medium of exchange, and the settlers had no other purchasers for their produce but the privileged dealers in that article, who took every advantage of them.

In 1807, two stills for manufacturing spirits were imported by Mr. M'Arthur and Captain Abbot, of the 102d regiment. The Governor seized them, and prohibited distillation in the colony. Much discontent grew out of this prohibition; and other difficulties occurred, which resulted in the arrest of Governor Bligh by the military, and other turbulent persons in the colony, in 1808. The home government now saw the necessity of putting down this lawless spirit, and reinstated Governor Bligh; but although he was also promoted to the rank of admiral, he is said to have died of a broken heart.

Governor Macquarie was his successor. He seems to have endeavoured

\* The Bush-rangers are still very troublesome at times. In addition to the runaway convicts, of which their bands are principally composed, they also include soldiers who have deserted. They occasionally commit great barbarities, and are consequently much dreaded. Few indeed of the lonely settlements are safe from their depredations. In order to suppress them, there is a body of mounted police; but its numbers are too small to put an effectual stop to the evil.