

three shirts, of strong linen or cotton, two pairs of trousers, three pairs of shoes, of stout durable leather, one hat or cap, and the use of a good blanket and mattress belonging to the master.

Custom, however, has extended the above allowances, and the quantity of luxuries added in tobacco, sugar, tea, and grog, makes the amount nearly double. These additions have become absolutely necessary in order to procure work from the convicts, and the free supply of them is the only way in which they can be made to work in the harvest season. I was informed that a settler considered it all-important to have a large stock of these luxuries on hand at the season of pressure; for although the assigned servants do not actually refuse to work, they do so little, that, in order to save his crop, the master must yield them the extra indulgences.

Another evil attendant on the assignment system is the difference in the treatment they receive from those to whom they are assigned. On the arrival of a convict-ship, a large number of persons who have made applications to the Board, are in waiting; they of course know nothing of the character of the convicts, and, as I learned from a good source, no record is kept, or sent with the convicts themselves. The Board is entirely ignorant of their character or crimes, and thus can exercise no discrimination in assigning the convict to the hands of a good or of a hard master. The greatest villains may, therefore, fall into kind hands, while one who is comparatively innocent may suffer much more than he deserves.

The punishment of transportation must continue very unequal until a classification be resorted to. Many convicts, by bad treatment, are confirmed in their vices.

For any misbehaviour, they are, as has been seen, subject to severe castigation upon their master's making oath before a magistrate. This not unfrequently drives the culprit or convict to further crime, and in revenge for these wrongs, he either neglects his master's interest, or has been known to set fire to his harvest when gathered.

The present system appears fitted to entail evil and misery on the colony, and there are few disinterested men who do not view it as calculated to prevent any moral improvement. Murders, robberies, and frauds are brought about by it, for which extreme punishments are of such frequent occurrence that it is a matter of astonishment that a stranger should remark that an execution had taken place. The day before our arrival five criminals had been hung, and more were to suffer in a few days.

These executions take place without causing any unusual excitement. There is little doubt that the convict population contains