

(No. 9.)



1869.

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TASMANIA.

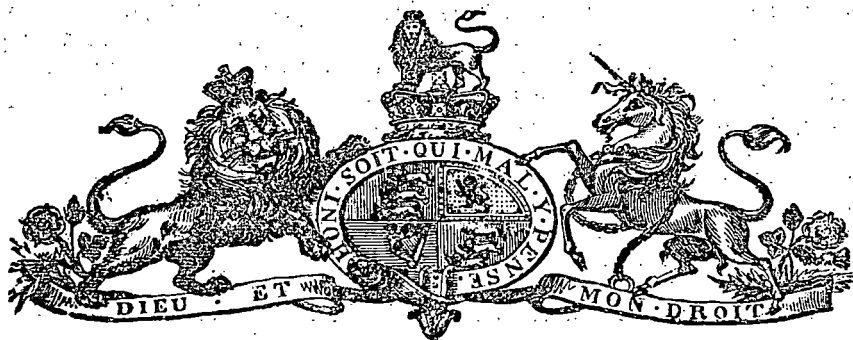
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BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

REPORT FOR 1868.

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Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, August 24, 1869.



*REPORT of the Committee of the BENEVOLENT SOCIETY of HOBART TOWN for the Year 1868.*

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THE Committee regret to have to state that the apprehensions expressed in the Report for 1867, of an increased demand to their funds to meet the requirements for 1868, with inadequate receipts to enable them to do so satisfactorily, were unfortunately realised.

The total expenditure for 1868 was £1964 15s. 7d., while the receipts were only £1535 8s. 6d., though the latter includes an additional Grant from the Government of £100, whereby the Society was saved from collapsing ere the year had expired.

The Society at the end of 1867 had only overdrawn its account at the Bank by £274 3s. 11d., but at the close of 1868 it was augmented to £429 7s. 1d.; thus nearly absorbing the whole of the £500 Debentures held by the Bank as security. The total subscriptions for 1868 appear in the account to be about £10 more than in 1867, but in reality the money subscribers have considerably diminished, as well as receipts from Church collections, public entertainments, &c.: only St. David's, Hobart Town, the Queen's Asylum Church at New Town, and St. Matthew's, New Norfolk, have responded to the usual circular from the Committee for an appeal to the congregations of the various places of worship on behalf of the Society. A public Oratorio was performed nominally on behalf of the funds of the Benevolent Society by the Town Hall Organ Fund amateurs, on the 17th August last, which realised £18 9s.,—but no part of it was handed over to this Committee, the whole being retained to cover expenses over receipts on the previous performance of the same Oratorio on behalf of the Organ Fund.

In 1867, "soup and soup tickets" were sold, realising £32 7s. 8d., while in 1868 only £3 12s. 5d. was received from this source. This is a fact of deep regret to the Committee, for it was hoped that benevolent individuals, anxious to relieve urgent applications on the plea of starvation without delay, would avail themselves of this certain means of preventing imposture in cases where they could not possibly personally undertake a tedious investigation into the real wants and character of the applicants for relief. Were all the money extracted from charitable people by the successful importunacy of habitual beggars and other impostors contributed to the funds of the Benevolent Society, every real case of destitution could readily be relieved, and professional mendicancy would cease to be a profitable pursuit, and drunken habits be extensively curtailed.

The year 1868 commenced with a large number of cases permanent on the books,—176 fresh applications were investigated during the year, embracing 521 individuals, *i.e.* 49 male, 127 female adults, 168 male, 177 female children. Of these applications 32 were rejected; of the 144 relieved 53 were cases rendered destitute by illness of the head of the family, 13 were widows, 17 husbands away, 12 husbands in prison, 17 aged and infirm, 1 blind, 9 accidents, 9 for children only owing to parental neglect, 13 destitute from various other causes.

The Registrar paid 514 visits to the homes of the recipients of aid from this Society, &c., and discharged all the duties entrusted to him to the entire satisfaction of the Committee.

The stores issued during the year were, 82,918 lbs. of bread, 33,546 lbs. of meat, 792 lbs. of tea, 5370 lbs of sugar, 6666 lbs. of oatmeal, 2514 lbs. of rice, 9371 pints of soup.

By issuing during the last six months of the year 20 per cent. bread to all adults and children, except sick and infants, a very considerable saving in the expense of bread was effected. It was supplied by contract, and its good and wholesome quality frequently and rigidly examined by the Chairman and other Members of the Committee, as well as by the Registrar.

During the winter 95 tons of wood and coal were contributed by various charitable persons, and proved an inestimable boon to many poor families. The market value of these donations is entered into the account as money contributions. The cutting up of the wood afforded employment to many who could work, but applied for relief on the plea of not being able to procure it; payment being always made in food for the work done, at the rate of 6*d.* per hour. A quantity of old Rugs were sent by the Principal of the Queen's Asylum, and were thankfully received by many poor families to add to their scanty bedding during the winter months.

During the last month of the year, the Committee carefully revised the permanent cases on the books of the Society, many of which have been in receipt of aid for years. Forty-two were struck off, so that 1869 commenced with fewer of these very burdensome cases than 1868 did; nevertheless the Committee can entertain little hope of the demands on the Society's funds being less this year than the last, and urge strongly on the public the necessity of contributing promptly and liberally to the funds, so that the destitute may not have to be provided for by an obnoxious poor-rate. Especially would the Committee call upon the inhabitants of the country districts to do more for the poor and destitute, most of whom seem to be necessitated to fly for relief to the Southern and Northern Capitals, and thus unfairly add to the burdens of the charitable residents in Hobart Town and Launceston.

During the year 1868, the Committee had constantly brought under its notice the increasingly depraved and neglected condition of large masses of the children of the colony. Every means in the power of the Committee to encourage the Children being sent to School and industriously employed have been zealously exerted, but with very partial success. When the Education Bill, therefore, was before Parliament, the Committee petitioned both Houses in favour of the compulsory enforcement of School attendance. It is to be hoped that the Board of Education will take active steps to enforce so important a measure, and by this means save multitudes of children from utter ignorance, with its usual attendants—idleness, poverty, and crime,—a more costly burden on the Colony. It cannot be expected that those who love little children will take upon themselves the invidious task of amateur informers for the purpose of enforcing this law. Paid officials must be appointed for the duty, if the Act is not to prove inoperative.

The Committee cannot close their remarks without congratulating the public on the commencement made by the generosity of the Honorable Mr. Kennerley, M.L.C., and other philanthropic individuals, in initiating the Male and Female Industrial Schools in Lansdowne Crescent and Church-streets respectively. Though these institutions will provide for a small proportion indeed of those requiring such care, yet it is to be hoped that the example will spread, and ere long produce incalculable good.

The Legislature surely, when it next meets, will take some more efficient steps than at present exist, to provide and reform children convicted of crime,—a proceeding that the Benevolent Society has urgently advocated from its commencement. Gaols all experience has proved to be, to the unfortunate children committed to them, only schools for acquiring more knowledge of, and greater expertness in crime. The success of Reformatory Institutions in England and elsewhere, costly though they may appear at first sight, should encourage the Government and people of Tasmania to institute such Establishments without delay, and thereby stem the torrent of crime which is causing so much mischief to the rising generation, and threatening to become so grievous a burden on the resources of the Colony.

The Executive Committee feel sorry to complain of the apathy shown by the Members of the General Committee in the management of the Charity. Year after year less than a dozen individuals have discharged nearly altogether the very onerous duties involved in the management; and at Quarterly and other General Meetings rarely any others than the members of the Executive Committee attend, so that it is frequently difficult to obtain the quorum of seven required. Those Members who have so long, quarter after quarter, and year after year, been obliged to manage the Society, would gladly see others undertake the duty in their turn.

Previous to the departure from the Colony of His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne, the Members of the Executive Committee did themselves the honor to present an Address to him, conveying their warm appreciation of His Excellency's continuous interest in the Society.

The Committee cannot conclude the Report without expressing their deep regret at the loss this Society sustained in the death of Captain Bateman, who from the commencement was one of its most ardent supporters.

**HOBART TOWN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY in Account with the Treasurer.**

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THOS. GIBLIN, *Treasurer.*

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T. J. CROUCH, *Hon. Secretary.*  
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