

To the Editor of the Colonial Times.

SIR,—It has frequently caused me great uneasiness and anxiety, to observe how much females are exposed to temptation on their landing, I mean those who come out prisoners. In the first place, if they are not assigned, they are huddled together in some building or other, under the pretence of being classified and protected from vice, while at the same time (they being put under the charge of an ignorant constable) the most disgusting transactions are carried on. I remember one night walking by the building, called the School-house, in the Paddock, at the time the females were confined there; when I saw the place surrounded by many fellows, who were feeing the constables and sentries to gain admission, while language and imprecations the most disgusting and appalling issued from within. The next day I mentioned the circumstances to several persons, who said it was useless to kick up a stir about it, for no notice would be taken of it. I therefore then dropped it, and should never have again resumed it, had I not observed with pleasure the effects which your strictures have had on the conduct of the Police. I therefore thought you might make something of this subject, if I could not. But, independent of what I have just mentioned, which is gone and past, there is a shameless traffic carried on in this town by some creatures in the form of women, who make a living by enticing newly-arrived females away from their places to their houses, which are the continual scenes of drunkenness, riot, and debauchery. These infamous women manage to introduce themselves to a servant the first time they see her, while she is quite ignorant of the wiles of the town, they wheedle and cajole, sympathise with, and pity her, till they learn in whose family she is living. This is then by them represented as the *worst* in the Colony—the mistress is a shrew—the master a tyrant, and the children, if there are any, headstrong, wilful, and unmanageable. Some other place is mentioned as a fine one—plenty to eat—plenty of clothes—good wages, and all the rest of it, and the poor deluded girl is persuaded that her place is miserable; she therefore

suffers herself to be enticed to these vile houses, where she is told, if she remonstrates at being kept after hours, that she will only get “turned in,” and be easily rid of a bad place. She gets insensible by liquor, and plunges into all the excesses which surround her. The night is spent in vice and drunkenness—in the morning, she is afraid to go home, and once dipped in infamy, she will not leave it till consigned to the horrible jaws of the Factory for six months, from whence she comes out an accomplished profligate. Though, I must admit, there are some instances where women see the folly of such conduct, by the reflection which is impressed so strongly upon their minds of the Factory. Such, Mr. Editor, is the cause of many a young woman, who would otherwise be a useful member of society, and I would wish to impress upon your mind the necessity of some step being resorted to, to put a stop to such horrid practices. It is quite bad enough to see women living upon the wages of their own infamy, without witnessing those whose hairs are grey, making a livelihood by the guilt of others. But there is yet another evil, which is caused by the inexperienced female servant visiting these sinks of iniquity. If her heart is not sufficiently corrupt to mix in the vices there, she becomes acquainted with some fellows, who, under the pretence of calling to see her, grow familiar with the ways of the house in which she lives, in order to be the better enabled to rob and plunder it, if an opportunity occurs. I would, therefore, suggest to you, Mr. Editor, whether there would be any impropriety in pardoning the female her *first* offence, on condition of her exposing those by whom she has been harboured and enticed away; and should she refuse on these conditions, keep her in solitary confinement till she would discover them, when let her out altogether to any other family who would take her. I would further suggest, that the most exemplary punishment which the law would allow, should be visited on the harbourers of assigned servants, particularly females. The stocks, solitary confinement, bread and water, &c. would, in my opinion, soon diminish the number of these infamous houses, and I think it would

redound more to the credit of certain Constables to be looking after such persons, than to be taking a few gallons of wine from a poor man, because he has no permit.—I am, Sir, yours,
PHILO.

In another part of our Journal, appears a communication from an old friend and long silent Correspondent, signed "*Philo*," on the subject of the enticing away and harbouring of assigned servants, especially females. We agree with our correspondent in most of his suggestions, and so far from what he proposes being improper, in our opinion, it would be highly commendable. Nothing is too severe for those women who forget the common rules of decency, so far as to live upon the horrid wages of another's profligacy, but who, not content with the low ebb of miser to which they have brought themselves, eat the bread of bitterness purchased at the expence [*sic*] of another's innocence and reputation.

We are sure that were these misguided females to reflect on the horrid nature of such an offence—a sin both in the eyes of God and man, they would never carry it to the lengths they do. A circumstance came under our own observation, which was pretty nearly similar to the description given by *Philo*.—A young female by the Sir Charles Forbes, was assigned to a good place, where she was well fed and received good wages. By some means she got into bad company, who poisoned her mind against her master and mistress, and induced her by every means to leave her place. She grew insolent, lazy, and obstinate, and at length ran away. She was taken before Mr. LAKELAND, J. P. who, at her master's intercession, ordered her to be confined four days on bread and water, and to be returned to her place. Such lenity is however very rare, and had it not been for her previous conduct, she would most probably have been thrown into the Female factory among a number of hardened women, from whom she would have learnt nothing but an increase of vice and moral turpitude. With respect to men servants, however, *Philo* says nothing, and while on the subject, we will therefore offer our remarks thereon.—Those very houses, which in the letter alluded to, are justly denounced as the destroyers of the female servants are no less the ruin of many of the men, for they are also enticed thither for the sake of being made the prey of these rapacious monsters, who with the harlot and the rum bottle, for they are all "Grog-

sellers," strip them of all they can *honestly* earn, which when gone, they are induced to steal for more. We therefore strenuously recommend, that active search should be made for the harbourers of assigned servants, both male and female, and in the *first instance* that the runaways should be pardoned on giving up those persons who have harboured and enticed them away.—These persons, we would have punished in the most severe manner possible, by the stocks—the pillory—or some such odious and public degradation, by which means the Public might perhaps be rid of some of those receptacles of reprobates—depots of drunkenness—schools of sensuality—nurseries of nuisances—and cess-pools of corruption, denominated as "Sly Grog-shops," for it is to them alone which we may attribute the present immorality of the lower class of people in Van Diemen's Land, and we can never sufficiently reprobate and inveigh against the neglect of the persons employed for the purpose, in not detecting, exposing, and putting them down; for we again repeat, they are the destroyers of the morals of the prisoner population, male and female; and until they are abolished, all the preachings, Peniten- ...