

you were not wedded to the "free fair homes of England," you would be content to dwell in peerless California.

It was at Placerville that the gold-fever rash broke out in this part of the world, and at Placerville a Californian passenger taken up at Sacramento ventures—singular to mention—to speak in terms of slight of the local gold-mining. He declares it a played-out game. The future of the State he believes lies in its magnificent agricultural resources, and in the abundance of the more prosaic minerals. To support his theory he gives me certain statements which I subsequently have the opportunity of verifying, and I will summarise them as the lessons I laid to heart at the close of my pleasant little railway trip; premising, by the way, that the six-shooter was never taken from its mahogany case, that the civilisation of San Francisco struck me as far superior to that of New York, and that while not forgetting the old adage, "It is not all gold that glitters," nothing will root out of my mind the conviction that California is the richest and most beautiful of the United States of America.

And now for brief evidence to character as to this paragon State. In South California, flowers bloom and the grass is green throughout the winter; invalids and children pass the greater part of the day out of doors in December, January, and February; corn planted in March and May is often harvested in

December, the land producing two crops—first wheat and barley, secondly oats in the same field. The harvest season being rainless, grain is threshed and bagged in the fields, and left there till sold. Chilian clover—capital feeding-stuff—has been known to produce fifteen tons an acre, yielding six to eight cuttings a year; cotton, silk, hops, beet, castor-bean, wool, almonds, olives, oranges, lemons, citrons, and English walnuts are fruitful sources of income to the husbandman. A farmer was met by a gentleman (whose name I could give) carrying to market, on a bright January day, oranges, pumpkins, a lamb, corn, green peas in their pods, sugar-cane, lemons, and *strawberries*. Heliotropes climb twenty feet high over the piazzas, and the winter flowers include jasmine, tuberose, and fragrant stock. Peach-trees bear a peck to the tree in the second year from the pit, apple-trees give a full crop in five years, vines yield well in the second season, and the kitchen-garden is productive all the year round. Willow or cotton-wood planted for fences supplies a man with fire-wood in two years, and gives him besides poles to support his overladen fruit-trees.

This and more of a similar kind might be told of this land of overflowing plenty. The one difficulty is water in the dry season, and those windmills we saw when San Francisco first opened out to our gratified eyes are largely employed in the necessary irrigation.

M. A.

ON BOARD AN EMIGRANT SHIP.



HAVING a great desire to go over an emigrant ship and learn something of actual emigration, we visited a fast sailing vessel of 760 tons, lying at anchor off Gravesend. We were most courteously received by all the officers on board, and soon learnt that they were bound to one of our colonies with 400 passengers, many of whom were on deck enjoying the air. There were poor men and women, whose faces bore traces of the struggles they had undergone to procure the necessaries of everyday life for themselves and their families. Others, with more physical strength, but whose improvident habits had possibly straitened their circumstances, were off for a fresh start.

The matron—a genial, motherly person, trained and appointed by a ladies' society in Fitzroy Street, connected with the emigration system—is evidently thoroughly competent to manage numbers by her judicious methods, gained from experience, and to secure their good-will by her general kindness and motherly care.

Her charge consisted of about fifty unmarried girls of various ages, from fifteen and upwards, drawn

from all parts of Great Britain, and who had been, or intended to be, domestic servants. It is her duty to arrange them in groups for the performance of such work as sweeping and cleaning, under the guidance of assistant matrons. She is also required to instruct them in cutting out and making up the materials supplied by ladies for suitable outfits. This knowledge is likely to prove an inestimable boon to them in after life, for doubtless the misery and discomfort of many cottage homes are mainly due to the lamentable ignorance of poor women on these points.

But we may hope for a better state of things by-and-by, for the School Boards for London and other parts of England have set a worthy example, in making needlework an important branch of education in our public elementary schools, and we hope they will appoint a female inspector to examine results.

The matron's little sleeping-place overlooks the girls' berths, which were arranged with much compactness and convenience. Each berth will accommodate two persons, and is separated from the next by a narrow ledge.

From one extremity to the other, deal slides are fastened to supporting beams by rods and bolts, and can be lowered to form tables when required, or raised and pushed overhead when not in use. The "ship lights" are constructed on the principle of a

carriage lamp, and maintain an upright position, whatever the motion of the vessel. No other lights are permitted, and thus safety from fire is secured.

Passing through a door, we entered the central division devoted to the married couples, and found the arrangements similar, except that the sleeping apartments are more roomy and are partitioned off, each entrance being screened by a curtain of blue glazed calico. Of course, the space is cramped compared with land accommodation, but is sufficient for comfort aboard ship.

The single men's division is fitted up much like that of the girls, only each man has a separate berth.

Besides a comfortably fitted bath-room and an infirmary, we noticed a store of boxes containing books and educational apparatus of all kinds, as well as standard works of light literature, and a plentiful supply of Bibles, prayer-books, and religious publications, the last-named being presents from various religious societies.

We watched with interest the working of a small engine, by which sea-water was pumped into a receiver to be distilled, and found it was agreeable to the taste. This water, being very soft, is excellent for washing. In order to guarantee their perfect working, such engines are tested at Lloyd's a month or two before they are required on board; but Government obliges each vessel to carry half the necessary fresh water supply in store, for fear of injury to the engine on the voyage.

Adjoining this small room is a fire-proof apartment employed as a kitchen, furnished with a range, boilers, &c. The spacious ovens will cook 600 pounds of meat at once, and are also used to bake the required quantity of bread. The live stock for future provision consisted of pigs, ducks, and fowls.

It was evident that no care or pains had been spared to secure, as far as possible, both the comfort and happiness of each individual, and of the whole community. Every arrangement spoke of much forethought, matured by long experience. This, I think, was fully appreciated by the emigrants themselves, who seemed cheerful and contented, and invariably spoke highly of those in authority.

Daily prayers are read on deck by the doctor. A schoolmaster is appointed to instruct the men and boys, when they are not engaged in ship-work; and the matron performs a similar duty towards the girls, which furnishes another kindly link between them.

With a few exceptions, of such as "had seen better days," and hoped to repair their shattered fortunes abroad, the emigrants consisted of domestic servants, labourers, mechanics, and artisans, with their wives and families. It was interesting to chat with the more intelligent of these last-named classes, whose youthful enthusiasm had not been greatly damped by excessive hardship in the past, and who therefore expressed themselves determined to labour to the utmost of their power, to win that success in the new country which was denied them in the old.

Perhaps we do not fully realise what emigration

really is. It is not the motion of a few stragglers across the ocean, but of great masses, and has in these days become a permanent institution of society. Labour always flows towards those districts where it is best rewarded, and this fact has now become so impressed upon the minds of Britons of all classes, that large numbers yearly resolve to try their fortunes by labour on newer and kindlier fields than their native home will afford. Ease of locomotion, the result of many inventions of modern civilisation, has facilitated the gratification of that desire; while the press, furnishing cheap and widely distributed newspapers, has likewise exercised a powerful influence in the same direction.

We all readily acknowledge, too, that emigration is an admirable means of disposing of our surplus population, who in times of trade depression and other distress are liable to be thrown out of work, and consequently to starve. Ignorance has hitherto supplied many excuses, and still creates a prejudice in the minds of large masses, which makes them indisposed to leave England and strive to better themselves. A little more knowledge would show them that the new home proposed to them very closely resembles the old. The climate may be different—often better—but the manners, customs, laws, literature, public institutions, means of education, and of communication by rapidly-extending railways, telegraphs, &c., are the same. Our Home Government, fully sensible of the great benefits which will ultimately accrue through individuals to the nation at large, have a regularly constituted system, under the direction of the Board of Emigration Commissioners, who employ proper officers to manage the various details, and publish a Colonial Circular, with all needful information for intending emigrants. All the colonies have some attractions, but perhaps two of the most favourable fields for emigrants now are Australia and the Dominion. Though not yet fully explored, the vast area of the former is known to be teeming with animal, vegetable, and mineral wealth; but its treasures are only very partially revealed to the public, for want of capital and labour.

The climate generally, especially in Queensland, is warm, but agreeable and healthy, less trying to the British constitution than that of colonies in other continents. And so anxious is this great country for labour, that it employs agents in London, empowered to offer every inducement by free and assisted passages to those who cannot afford to pay for themselves—as labourers, servants, &c.—with grants of land and purchase on easy terms to those who can; and they furnish all applicants with a hand-book of statistics respecting the particular district, free.

The most acceptable persons are strong, able-bodied men, willing to rough it, and to turn their hand to any employment that offers itself, content to endure present evil in order to secure future good. Domestic servants are also in great demand. These are all often engaged by the agents before they go on board. The journey to Australia is accomplished by a sailing vessel in about ninety, and by a steamer in sixty days.