

SHALL WE EMIGRATE TO NEW ZEALAND?



HAVING lately returned from New Zealand, and seen the splendid field for emigration which it offers,

I think some information regarding it may be of interest to the general public.

"Where shall we go to?" is a question often asked now-a-days: not for a day's outing, nor for a few weeks at the seaside.

The question is one of far greater significance, and is asked after a family, or portion of a family, have made up their minds to abandon the old home—where all have perhaps from childhood lived and worked together—and, beginning afresh, to seek their fortunes in a distant land. Formerly there was generally but one answer to the question—"America." But it is now in the great cities of the United States as difficult for an artisan or a labourer to obtain employment as in any part of "the old country." There is yet an immense amount of land open to agricultural emigrants in the far West; but all emigrants are not agriculturists, nor have many of them who are the capital necessary to commence life there without a great risk of failure from a bad season, or from other causes which not unfrequently leave the farmer at the end of the harvest no better off than he was when he sowed his seed.

Canada* is another field open to the intending emigrant, and presents what the great majority of emigrants consider to be the advantage of being under British rule. But to many the great extremes of heat and cold in Canada—which now includes almost the whole of British America—are strong objections. The country is almost entirely agricultural. There are very few manufactories; and, excepting agriculture, the timber trade—called there "lumbering"—is the chief industry of the country. To this may be added the employment to be found in the extensive fisheries of the eastern provinces—Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, &c.—but which an emigrant is not likely to take to, as the larger part of the emigrating class are from inland places, and know nothing of seafaring matters or of sea-fishing.

I have touched but lightly on the fields for emigration nearer home, because, although they are more distant, New Zealand and Australia appear to me to

offer a much greater certainty of success to the emigrant than can be found in any part of the American continent; and of these two New Zealand is, to my mind, the better.

New Zealand consists of three islands, known as North Island, Middle Island, and Stewart's Island; which latter is a small island lying to the south of the Middle Island, and containing only 760 square miles. The North Island contains about 44,000 square miles, having a rather smaller area than England. The Middle Island contains about 55,000 square miles, having an area about equal to that of England and Wales combined.

In 1870 the population of New Zealand was 248,000. A census was taken again in March, 1878, by which the population was ascertained to be nearly 415,000, besides 45,000 Maories, or natives, giving an increase in the white population of 67 per cent. in eight years. The greater number of the Maories live in the North Island, there being upwards of 40,000 of them there. They are scattered over an area of 28,890,000 acres, giving less than one native to the square mile. The greater number of them are Christians, and they have many churches and schools, and are daily more and more conforming to European habits in their dress, manners, and houses. Some of the Maories are very wealthy, deriving a large income from the leases of their lands. Lands belonging to the natives are not now allowed to be bought by speculators to be re-sold at a high profit. The Government reserves to itself the right of purchasing land from the chiefs, who are thereby protected from imposition; and the settler has the advantage of purchasing land from Government on very easy terms. The chiefs are allowed to lease their lands, but under Government supervision.

The climate of New Zealand is more equable than that of England, the variations of temperature being less. It must be remembered that, as New Zealand is in the southern hemisphere, all the meteorological conditions are the reverse of those in countries like England, in the northern hemisphere, excepting the east and west winds, which are the same there as here. Thus, in the southern hemisphere the north wind is warm and damp, while the south wind is cold and dry. The sun is seen to the north at noon instead of to the south, and the moon also; while constellations which, like the Great Bear, are seen by us in England in the northern sky, are not visible at all in New Zealand. But the inhabitants of the southern hemisphere see many constellations in the southern skies which are never seen by us in the north.

The country is somewhat mountainous, the chain of hills running from north to south throughout the islands. These are not generally too high for pasturage, but some few peaks in the Middle Island rise to from 10,000 to 14,000 feet in height, and their tops are covered with perpetual snow. This, in melting, gives rise to mountain streams which feed the rivers,

* I speak concerning Canada and the United States from an experience of seven years' residence in Canada and three years in the United States.

and fertilise the extensive plains below. The rivers of New Zealand are both numerous and large for the size of the country.

Gold is found in considerable quantities in New Zealand, both as alluvial gold, which is obtained by washing the deposits of "dirt," with which the gold is mixed, and also in veins in the quartz rock. The quantity of gold exported from the islands between April 1, 1857, and June 30, 1878, was 8,826,795 ounces, the value of which is set down at £64,476,495 sterling. Of this, £711,301 sterling were exported in the half-year ending June 30, 1878.

Other valuable metals, such as silver, mercury, copper, lead, chromium, manganese, and—last, but most important—iron, have been discovered in the colony, and will be worked to advantage. Large deposits of iron in the form of sand have been recently discovered, and steps are being taken to establish smelting-works for the purpose of working this most valuable mineral. Deposits of iron-ore are comparatively valueless in the absence of coal; but coal is found abundantly in many parts of the colony. The coal-fields are subdivided, and let by Government on terms very favourable to the lessees.

Fire-clay, used in making fire-bricks, and essential for the building of iron and glass furnaces, is found here; also quartz-sands, equal in quality to the best sands of Germany, which latter are largely imported into England for the manufacture of glass.

Limestones, suitable both for the kiln and for building purposes, are abundant. Building stones of various qualities and grain are found in large quantities.

There are in the islands between 160,000,000 and 170,000,000 acres suitable for farming purposes, of which about 50,000,000 are better adapted for pasturage, the remainder being better for agricultural uses. Almost every known variety of soil is found in New Zealand; and, by a proper selection of soil and system of agriculture, every variety of cereal and root crop may be raised in one or other part of the islands. There are large areas where the soil is composed of the *débris* from volcanic rocks, and this is well known to be the favourite pabulum of the finest kinds of grapevines. New Zealand will probably in time be a large wine-producing country.

There are no large quadrupeds indigenous to New Zealand, a small kind of rat being apparently the only one; but all kinds of domestic cattle have been introduced, and thrive abundantly. The rabbit has increased to such an extent as to be, in some places, a nuisance. Hares, pheasants, partridges, and other kinds of game, together with many varieties of small birds, have been introduced, and are now spread over the country.

The rivers, which contained quantities of native eels and some few other fish, are being stocked with trout, which do well, and multiply fast in their new home; the perch has also been successfully acclimatised. The sea produces large quantities of useful and delicious fish, as well as oysters, mussels, and other shellfish. The shores are visited at certain seasons by shoals of pilchards and mackerel.

The indigenous forest of New Zealand is ever green, and contains some very valuable kinds of timber. Many of the more valuable trees of Europe and America have been introduced, and flourish with a vigour rarely seen in their original homes. Fruit is abundant all over the colony, among the best of which are oranges, lemons, citrons, loquato, peaches, apples, pears, grapes, melons, figs, apricots, plums, and many others.

Among the useful institutions of the colony may be mentioned the savings-banks, insurance offices, the post office, with its system of money orders, by which residents in New Zealand may transmit money to their relatives at home; the railways, which are being gradually extended over the islands, and especially the telegraphs. New Zealand is now connected by telegraph submarine cable with England *via* Australia; and as the local time in New Zealand is nearly twelve hours ahead of Greenwich time, a message may be apparently received in London some hours before it left New Zealand.

Some information as to the various ways of reaching New Zealand will not be out of place here. In the first place, free passages may be obtained on vessels specially chartered for the purpose by the New Zealand Government. Full information as to these free passages will be given in my next article on this subject. For those who prefer to pay their own passage, vessels are constantly leaving Great Britain for various ports in New Zealand, by which passages may be obtained for prices varying from £15 to £50, according to accommodation. These, as well as the Government ships, are sailing vessels, and the time occupied in the voyage is about three months. The quickest, but most expensive, way of going is by New York and San Francisco. The voyage from Liverpool to New York is about ten or eleven days; from New York to San Francisco, by rail, seven days; and from San Francisco to Auckland, New Zealand, about twenty-one days: thus, New Zealand may be reached in six weeks from Liverpool. The steamers from San Francisco sail monthly, so that any one wishing to go quickly will do well to ascertain the dates of the sailings of the steamers from San Francisco before starting. Through tickets may be obtained by this route for from £72 to £75; in addition to this the traveller has to pay for his meals between New York and San Francisco, and also for a sleeping-berth, should he desire one. Many steamers are constantly sailing for various ports in Australia from Great Britain, and there is very frequent communication by steamer between Australia and New Zealand, the length of the passage being from five to seven days.

The following list will give some idea of the rates of wages in New Zealand; but it must be remembered that there, as at home, it is only steady, industrious workers who will command the highest wages. The supply of clerks, accountants, and book-keepers is, as in most of the colonies, generally in excess of the demand. The salaries range from £1 10s. to £5 per week:—

Bakers (foremen) . . .	£2 to £2 10s. per week.
Bricklayers . . .	10s. to 12s. per day.
Bushmen . . .	25s. per week, and board
Blacksmiths . . .	9s. to 11s. per day.
Cooks (male) . . .	20s. to 60s. per week.
„ (female) . . .	12s. to 20s. „
Governesses . . .	£50 to £70 per annum.
„ (nursery) . . .	£30 to £50 „
Housemaids . . .	10s. to 15s. per week.
Labourers . . .	6s. to 7s. per day.
Milliners . . .	20s. to 40s. per week.
Needlewomen . . .	12s. to £1 per week.
Millers . . .	£2 to £3 per week.
Painters . . .	8s. to 9s. per day.
Compositors . . .	£2 to £2 5s. per week.
Shipwrights . . .	10s. to 12s. per day.
Stonemasons . . .	12s. to 13s. per day.
General servants . . .	8s. to 12s. per week.
Tailors . . .	£2 to £4 per week.
Cutters (good) . . .	About £5 „
Tailoresses . . .	£1 per week.

As to other trades, wages vary from £2 to £3 per week.

Married couples on farms get from £60 to £70 per year, and all found. Single men, £50 to £60, and all found. Single women (dairy-maids), £20 to £30, and all found.

Variations from these numbers will be found in various parts of the colony, but the above may be taken as a fair average.

The cost of living in New Zealand is less than in England, and thus the advantage offered by high rates of wages is real, and not apparent, as in the United States, where, with high wages, labourers often find themselves worse off than in the "old country" with smaller wages, on account of the high price of the necessaries of life. A four-roomed house in Auckland may be rented at from 6s. to 8s. per week; a six-roomed house, 12s. to 18s. per week. Rents, however, vary considerably according to situation. A good four-roomed weather-board cottage, lined and papered, may be built in the suburbs of Auckland for about £150. Allotments may be bought in the same situation for from 5s. to 25s. per foot frontage, with a depth of from 60 to 100 feet.

It is advisable for emigrants to take out nothing with them beyond what is absolutely necessary. They will do far better by converting their goods into cash in England, and purchasing what they find necessary after arriving in the colony.

Free passages will be granted by the Government of New Zealand until further notice, upon certain conditions, to the following classes:—Married and single farm labourers, also single women, such as cooks, housemaids, nurses, general servants, dairy-maids, &c., who are not under fifteen, nor over thirty-five years

of age; also persons nominated by their friends in the colony, provided such nominations have been approved by the Government in the colony. In all cases they must be sober, industrious, of good moral character, of sound mind and body, in good health, able to perform the duties of the occupations to which they belong, and must be going to the colony to reside and settle there. Forms of application for free passages are to be obtained from the Agent-General for New Zealand, 7, Westminster Chambers, London, S.W.

No assistance will be given to single men above the age of forty years, nor to married men above the age of forty-five; but any person ineligible on account of age may, if he is related to a family eligible for assistance, and is approved by the Agent-General, receive a passage in a Government emigrant ship on payment of the expense incurred by the Government in providing it. All emigrants over twelve years of age are provided with bedding, utensils, and a supply of marine soap for washing clothes on the voyage, on payment of twenty shillings, which is required to be paid before they receive their embarkation order. Children between one and twelve years pay ten shillings, and infants under one year are free. At present, single women of seventeen years of age and upwards, who are domestic servants, will be supplied with the ship's outfit free of cost, and will, in addition, either receive a free pass from their home to the place of embarkation, or will have a reasonable amount of their expenses, by rail or steamboat, in reaching the port of embarkation refunded to them. On arrival at the port of embarkation, the emigrants are lodged and fed in the Government emigration depôt, free of expense, until they are put on board their ship. On arrival at the port of destination they are again lodged and fed, free of expense, at a comfortable depôt for a reasonable time, and are free to make their own engagements.

It is impossible, within the limits of a short article, to give full information on all points; but I may say, in conclusion, that all who are able and willing to work with their hands, and who are temperate, sober, and honest, may in New Zealand be certain of making a comfortable living at once, with the prospect of having after a few years a home of their own, with every reasonable comfort around them; with opportunities for worship, to whatever religious denomination they may belong, and with schools for the education of their children. Office-seekers, clerks, and all who are not prepared for really hard work, for awhile had better stay away.

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