



"ADVICE GRATIS."

*(A Sketch at the Emigration Bureau.)*

## EMIGRATION "MADE EASY."

BY F. M. HOLMES.



AN APPLICANT.

"WELL, my friend, why do you want to emigrate?"

"'Cos I can't get nothin' to do here, sir; I've had no reg'lar work for eight months!"

"What is your work?"

"Tobacco-spinning. I have worked at that for many years at Bristol. I got twenty-five shillin' a week there."

"Why did you leave?"

"I left to better myself. Twenty-five shillin' a week ain't much to keep a wife and ten children on, and that's the size of my family now. During the last eight months I have walked no end after work, and not earned an average of four shillin' a week; as for regular work, can't get it."

"I walked to Liverpool and tried all the factories there; then I went to St. Helens, but could get nothing; then I walked to Manchester, and inquired at all the seven factories there; but no chance, so I got on to Chester, where there are three factories; but it was the same. When at Chester, I had a letter from my wife that one of the children was ill with typhoid fever. So I set off home."

The poor man struggled back from Chester to Shrewsbury, and thence to Kidderminster, and Gloucester, sleeping under hedges, or wherever he could find a resting-place, and getting what food he could—walked with black despair in his heart. To him the lovely English country had no beauty, and offered no home. Often, as night drew on, he would see the light shining cheerfully in cottage-homes; but none for him. He must struggle on, hopeless and weary, to where his family,

poverty-stricken and sick with fever, were awaiting him—and he had nothing for them!

"When I got to Bristol," he continues, "I found two children ill with fever, and I applied to the parish; but they said they could not help me, as they had so many calls. But they gave me work at breaking stones, for which I got two shillin' a day—one shillin' in money, and the rest in food."

And then, into this home of misery another baby was born! The poor man got a next-door neighbour to look after his wife while he was breaking the stones. Other children sickened with the fever, one grew gradually better, and so the sad existence went on. He continued work at the stone-yard, until he broke down with rheumatism; then the doctor gave him a certificate, and the parish allowed him seven loaves and seven shillings for a fortnight, and the poor man resumed his struggles after work. He applied for telephone work, waggon work, and all kinds of warehouse work, while the family struggled along on parish out-door relief. Then came the thought of emigrating.

Now this is a true tale; and only one, we fear, of many, for this man further spoke of thousands being like himself, out of work, and hopeless of getting any. This terrible state of things gives more and more urgency to the proposals for the establishment and development of all kinds of peasant industries, to the necessity for technical education, and to the immense importance of wisely-directed emigration.

A great step in the latter direction has recently been taken in the establishment—under Government—of the Emigrants' Information Office, at 31, Broadway, Westminster.

The pressing need for such an office was speedily apparent, for no sooner was it opened than a steady stream of all sorts and conditions of men flowed into it, to seek hints from the energetic chief clerk, Mr. John Pulker, or to bear away a bundle of the circulars

and pamphlets issued there. To watch these people drifting in, to mark their faces and their dress, is to realise very fully the great and wide-spread depression of the labour-market. Now a navvy appears, in his rough kerseymere trousers and thick pilot coat; then a light-limbed messenger, with his blue baize bag for carrying small parcels; anon a shabby-genteel young man, like a clerk "out of a berth;" yet again, a regular London loafer, his clothes very patched and ragged, his hat battered and his face vague, aimless-looking, and lacking any sign of decision of character. All these and many others have streamed into the new office, hoping that at last a chance may have "turned up" for them. Some are respectable-looking old men, whose faces tell you clearly that they are bitterly disappointed with life and have broken down in the struggle for existence; others again are unfledged youths who have not yet, so to speak, found their wings, or in other words, finally decided on their business in the world; school-teachers, and dock-labourers, plumbers and painters, mechanics and warehousemen—in short, representatives of almost every section of the community, have found their way hither. Sometimes the office has been quite full, while outside has congregated quite a little mob discussing eagerly the momentous question of seeking their livelihood abroad.

Yet it is remarkable that few seem to be made of the right stuff for successful emigrants. Decision of character, energy, tenacity of purpose, are all needed in the new countries, as well as muscular strength; and these, it must be confessed, seem wanting in many of those persons making application at the new bureau.

The office does not offer pecuniary aid, as some persons erroneously supposed, nor is there a wide-spread demand in the colonies for labour—except that of farm

and domestic servants. Yet it is almost pathetic to see the numbers who steadily come up, one after the other, in hopes, no doubt, of discovering a new path to competence, and a way out of their present difficulties.

But it is noticeable that many candidates for emigration cannot be called skilled workmen. One has been ship's stoker; he has a wife and eight children, the youngest four months old.

"Have you done anything else?"

"Oh, yes! I've worked in a builder's yard for near upon two years, and likewise in various shops. But I can't get any regular work now. I thort if I could, get to Western Australia we might have a chance. I am thirty-three years of age."

This man, it will be seen, could hardly be called a skilled artisan. He takes any "jobs" he can get.

Another boy, for he is little more—he gives his age at seventeen—speaks of himself as a warehouseman or labourer, and says he has been employed as labourer in a tin factory, and also as a horse-keeper. He would like to go to Queensland, though, poor fellow, what he is to do then, unless he can learn farm-work, it is difficult to see. Perhaps his experience as "horse-keeper" may help him.

The question, "Have you friends in the colonies?" is, we suppose, asked more often in the new Emigrant Office and in the offices of Emigration Societies than any other. And the answers given show that the knowledge of some would-be emigrants is very vague. Manitoba might be in Australia, and Queensland in Canada, for aught that some know, while the ideas of many as to what the colonies are like are of the dimmest.

Now the new office has been established to enlighten this ignorance, and to give information as to the state of the labour-market in the different colonies. The object is to collect under one roof, and indeed in one room, the most useful particulars and valuable hints for emigrants—the chances that men or women may have, at various times, of obtaining employment, and the wages they are likely to receive; the lowest cost of travelling, and whether free, assisted, or nominated passages can be obtained; the climate, and the best time for arriving at the different colonies: all this and many details as to the natural products of the different lands, the population, the regulations as to education, &c., obtaining in our various foreign possessions, are set forth with clearness and accuracy in the circulars issued at the office. It is already—and it is likely to become increasingly so—a centre from which the streams of emigration may be wisely directed, and may flow to fertilise the lands of our vast Colonial Empire. It will be, as it were, the heart of the great emigration movement.

The office diffuses its information in three ways—by strikingly-printed posters distributed to clubs and post-offices, by pamphlets given to applicants or sent through the post to any address, and thirdly, by the very full and complete handbooks at the charge of one penny each. Yet again, there are very courteous, well-informed officials to hold a conversation with any applicant who chooses to call. Could anything more in



DISCUSSING THE EMIGRATION QUESTION.  
(A Scene in a Country Post-Office.)

the way of giving reliable information or advice be required?

Hitherto this information has been extremely difficult to obtain, and the want of it has no doubt been



"A KNOWLEDGE OF AGRICULTURE—WITH A LITTLE CAPITAL."

a barrier to emigration—because cautious folk do not like to take steps in the dark—and has caused a large amount of suffering and disappointment to persons who have emigrated at the wrong season.

At present farm labourers and female domestic servants are the persons who appear to be principally required. In most colonies, such as Natal, Western Australia, and the North-West of Canada, there are also openings for men with enough money to buy and stock land. But for clerks, mechanics, tradesmen, and professional men, there seems but little chance. The fact is, emigrants must either be prepared to labour on the land for farmers, or else be in a position to take up land grants on the terms offered, and settle thereon themselves. It is clearly of no use for persons to do this who have no money and no idea of agriculture.

It is also abundantly clear from the circulars that there is a preponderance of men over women in the colonies, and that capable, sensible women are in steady request in every colony. Perhaps one of the most important social movements in which practical philanthropists could now engage would be to organise or supervise the safe emigration of such young women to our colonies. Men have largely emigrated and women have not; there are greater numbers of the latter at home, while the former preponderate abroad. Miss Emily Faithfull, in a sensible and practical letter in one of the daily papers, recently pointed out that there are many English girls who would gladly emigrate if they had the means. "No loss of caste," writes Miss Faithfull, "attends them if they undertake the domestic duties in our colonies which we have learnt to regard as menial here. The Colonial Emigration Society," Miss Faithfull proceeds to say, "opened a loan fund some time since, and many who

have now found happy homes across the sea were glad to borrow their passage money, and have returned it with interest."

The new office therefore has done immense good in thus bringing prominently before the public the need existing for women workers in the colonies. Girls need not starve on a shilling a day in London, for there is plenty of well-paid domestic work awaiting them abroad; and if only kindly-disposed ladies would take them in hand, see that they get a little preliminary drilling in domestic service, and send them to our colonies, a healthy, happy life awaits them there, if only they choose to do their duty. That such will be one of the results of the new Emigrants' Information Office we earnestly desire.

But indeed the whole question of selecting and assisting emigrants—both male and female—to the colonies is one of ever-increasing importance. We need not now discuss the grave question of State-aided emigration, but we can point to the successful effort of voluntary societies, and these, if helped by a philanthropic public, could largely extend their operations. Thus the Self-Help Emigration Society, Fleet Lane, E.C., which seeks to place emigrants in situations abroad, has done much good during its short term of existence. In 1885 it sent 64 emigrants to Canada; from the 1st of March to the end of October in 1886 it sent 214 emigrants to the same colony, and in addition about 100 to the Australasian and South African colonies. It has now made arrangements to place between 700 and 800 in Canada during the spring of 1887, should the necessary funds be forthcoming.

These results may seem small, but they have given happiness to many individuals; and several such societies, able to do their work thoroughly, seem likely



"CAN'T FIND NOTHING TO DO HERE."

to do more real good than one huge and unwieldy concern. At all events, it is clear that the new Emigration Office will do much to place this momentous question on a more satisfactory basis than heretofore.