



THE PROSPECTS OF MIDDLE CLASS EMIGRANTS.

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WE hear a great deal about the "very poor" in these days of philanthropy, and a great deal about the "working man" now that a social science congress is of daily occurrence in club or drawing-room; and indeed there seems some danger of these classes getting more than their fair share of the sympathy, nay, even of the assistance, of the public. We hear little about the classes above them, the middle and the lower middle classes. Prosperous classes, you may say they are, and in the main no doubt it is so; but how many among their ranks, "fairly well-born and educated, with all the tastes and instincts of refinement" do not know where to turn for work, possibly for subsistence; and how many more there are, who, though eking out a reasonable livelihood for themselves, are in despair of finding any career, however humble, for their sons.

Such people deserve far more sympathy than they get, and yet it is especially difficult in their case to put one's sympathy to a practical test by anything one can do for them in this country. And unfortunately they are just the very class of people to whom emigration seems to hold out the smallest hope. Sitting on the Committee of an Emigration Society, and interviewing the candidates who come before us, we have readily "passed" the artizan, the strong labourer, even the town lad, who has been erratic in his industrial career, but seems anxious at last to take steadily to hard work if only he can get it regularly. And then there comes before us the young man of better position, who has had a fair or good education, speaks well and writes well, can readily pay his own passage, and only wants our advice; and it is often our hard lot to tell him that we fear he is too "respectable," that we cannot encourage him to go; and his harder lot to feel that though the colonies are open to the working man, they seem practically closed to such as him.

Here as elsewhere extremes meet. As a rule, the capitalist may safely emigrate, for he can at least live on his capital in the colony as he has done in England, and while he is looking round for a suitable means of employing it, he can temporarily put it out to better advantage. The artisan, and still more the agricultural labourer, may as a rule, safely emigrate, at least if he have a few pounds in his pocket, the necessary number of which will vary with the season of the year and the colony he chooses. But how about the great class lying between these two extremes, how about the middle classes? For once, *In medio non tutissimus ibis*. The best advice to them is, temporarily at any rate, to desert their class. Either try with economy and the help of friends to emigrate in some measure at least as capitalists, or failing that, let them be willing, if strength and courage and endurance permit, to join in the new country the ranks of the labouring classes. This is a hard saying, and possibly for the sake of emphasis it may have been put a little too harshly. Let us see what a determined member of the middle classes might possibly turn to, if he says to himself "emigrate I will, warning or no warning."

FARMING.

In a new country there is always the illimitable field of farming,—in which expression may here be included all pursuits agricultural, pastoral and others connected with

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the land and what grows upon it,—and this is perhaps the first thought of most emigrants. And here let a note of warning be sounded. Don't pay premiums to farmers. If the young man has no money of his own, his friends would no doubt find him £100 for such a purpose, but it would be £100 wasted. In return for it the farmer would no doubt house and feed him, would possibly allow him to ride a horse—if only to enable him to ride daily into the town for letters, or on errands for the farmer's wife; and according to the disposition and temperament of the individual farmer, he might pick up a smattering of agricultural lore. Not being compelled to work and with time on his hands in a dull country he might get into mischief; and indeed so unsatisfactory is in general the life of a so-called "cadet," that in Australia, at any rate, there is a comparatively small proportion of farmers who seem willing to take them. No, let our young emigrant take the £100 by all means if he can,—put it in the bank, hire himself to work with a farmer, at small wages it may be at the outset but still inclusive of food and lodging though of rough kind; and, if industrious and well-disposed most farmers would gladly help him forward. Experience must come through work, the wages will increase and accumulate (a good farm labourer in Australia will get £50 a year and his rations), and after a few years these accumulations and the augmented £100 will serve him to make a small beginning on his own account, perhaps without wholly abandoning the work for the farmer. Indeed in some districts he might before this have been doing a little on his own account in cattle dealing, with or without the assistance of a few hired acres. The days will no doubt have been long, and the work hard, and the life very different from what he has been accustomed to at home, but this young man's ultimate chances of success will be immeasurably greater than those of the premium-paying cadet. It is not every young man that is physically strong enough, even if his will be strong enough, for such a career. That however is a question for each man to decide for himself.

It may not be out of place to say a few words about the man with some capital behind him who means to go out and take up land. The first question is,—Does he mean to work himself? If so, well and good; if not, let him beware, for wages are high and eat up a lot of money, and his venture will entail greater risk. But even if he does mean to work, he must not be in too great a hurry. Let him deposit his money in the bank, and work as a farm labourer for a year or two, in order to learn something about the land in the district, and the ways of the country before risking his money on a new venture. For instance: he may first go to the South Island of New Zealand, and while learning mixed farming on its open, fertile plains, may decide to try his luck in the North Island on its lower-priced timber land, or *vice versa*. If he first goes to New South Wales, he may find out afterwards that he has a better chance of getting the land he wants in Queensland. Or if beginning with wheat-growing in Victoria, he may eventually prefer to cross the Murray to the sheep runs of Riverina, or try his fortune at fruit culture at one of Messrs. Chaffey's irrigation settlements, Mildura or Renmark. Again if he were to go and take up a free homestead of 160 acres in the North-west of Canada, and spend money on its improvement, he might discover in a year's time that he would have done better to pay three dollars an acre for land more accessible to market or railway; or if he had paid money for his land, he might afterwards regret that he had not taken it up free. This free land to the extent of 160 acres is the great attraction of Canada. It is to be obtained in no other colony except Queensland, where the land orders obtained by emigrants paying their own passages indirectly entitle them to a free grant of similar amount as in Canada. Information about Crown Lands in the various Colonies will be found in the publications of the Emigrants' Information Office. It would be unwise to attempt here to advise the would-be farmer which colony to select. So much depends upon circumstances.

OTHER OPENINGS.

There are other careers besides farming in which a strong man who does not decline rough work may make a beginning. Work for a contractor who has some new railway or other public work in hand is usually hard work, but it is more easily obtainable than many kinds of lighter work, and the pay is good and generally includes board. There is this advantage that wages in the bush are to a sober man worth a good thirty per cent. more than they are in the town; for there is no oppor-

tunity of spending them. Moreover the man who proves himself reliable and intelligent has a chance of being made boss or foreman, and all the time he is getting experience, and may consider himself as undergoing a sort of apprenticeship to colonial life until more suitable employment can be obtained. I have met University men on the railway in Canada, and gardening in Australia. Even more menial occupations may be pursued for a time. Thus some men become porters in country hotels, where the work is long and hard, but the earning fair, and opportunities occur of hearing of something better. And one may lay it down as a general rule, that the country districts rather than the large towns should be the goal of every emigrant.

As a passing suggestion I may add that a post in the constabulary, if it can be obtained, offers not a bad career at least for a start. I have heard these posts described on high authority as very comfortable berths especially in the country, where the constabulary are frequently "mounted," and that young Englishmen of good family not unfrequently take them. In New South Wales the pay is seven and sixpence a day, and one shilling a day lodging allowance with two suits of clothes in the year, and yet I was informed on the best authority that out of 1,500, no fewer than one hundred had, in the previous year, given up their employment in order to better themselves.

THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWING A TRADE.

If before leaving England the young man has learned a trade, his chances are of course improved, though he must not count too certainly on obtaining work. A young engineer went with introductions to Tasmania some two years ago. After he had been there some months, his parents, respectable middle-class people, were much concerned at not hearing from him. Nearly a year passed without news and at length he wrote and gave his experience. He had at first been unable to get more than a day or two's work and his means were nearly exhausted. He had tramped up country for more than 200 miles to a mine, and arrived "as stiff as a rock and as tired as ever I wish to be." But he got work at nine shillings a day; soon his engineering came in useful and he was employed putting up machinery at twelve shillings a day,—then he got a splinter in his hand and was laid up for three months which took away all his earnings. Again he got work putting up huts in the bush—and once more had a spell out of work. And how does he find himself at the end of eighteen months? He is regularly employed at responsible work at a mine at £2 14s. *od.*, a week, he has a little canvas house of his own, and "when the place is closed up and a good fire on, one cannot wish to be more comfortable." he is sixteen pounds heavier than when he left England and about twice as strong; and he says—"My opinion is that young fellows coming out with a pound or two at their back, need never be out of work long, that is if they don't mind shifting from one place to another, but for all that it goes rather hard for a perfect stranger, not knowing the likeliest places to obtain work." And he ends up by urging his brother to come out, and offering to pay his passage home again if the brother does not like it. "So try and come and make up your mind to work, for we have to work up here. It is a happy life out here, everybody sociable, and no one hard up for a shilling or two or a feed."

The desirability of knowing a trade may be illustrated by the case of two young men we met in New Zealand, companions who had recently come from England. One was a carpenter, and though trade was then dull he managed to get a few jobs which, at the high wages of say ten shillings a day, would have secured him a decent living. But the other was a warehouse clerk; he could get no work, and as two mouths proved too great a drain on the meagre resources of the carpenter, both determined to go up country, and try their luck at rough work for some contractor. Let us learn a lesson from the engineer, the carpenter, and still more, the warehouse clerk. The possession of a trade is of the greatest value, but the higher you rise *socially* in the scale of labour in the Colonies, the greater is the uncertainty of obtaining employment, and the greater the need for ample resources to fall back upon in the meantime, or readiness to take and to do whatever rough work may offer itself.

CLERKS AND THEIR CHANCES.

What do the circulars of the Emigrants' Information Office say on this subject? As to Canada:—"Clerks, shopmen, storekeepers, women above the grade of servants,

and persons having no particular trade or calling, or otherwise unfit for manual labour, should not think of emigrating." "Clerks are specially warned against emigrating to Sydney." "Clerks, shopmen, and warehousemen are specially warned against emigrating to South Australia," and so forth. A government office may perhaps rightly err on the side of caution. But still "clerks are warned against emigration" is practically the cry that comes from every colony. And there is an obvious reason for this: namely, that the sons of the farmers and the well-to-do artisans are there, even more rapidly than here, deserting the plough and the plane for the pen and the counter.

And yet if one converses freely with men of that stamp whether in Canada or Australia, it is surprising how many of them have come from the old country and that in recent years. Some no doubt, have had friends in the Colonies, and this is a great advantage; for it is wonderful how, with a real friend, a berth can be made somehow. One Melbourne shop-assistant has come from London, and finds his wages have nearly doubled while he hardly pays more for his board, and gets better fed and more holidays. But then he was a shop-assistant in London, and knew his business well. Another is a young graduate of a Scotch University, who, at the early age of four- or five- and twenty is promoted to the post of station-master on a New Zealand railway, and thinks that people with an education succeed far better, for they learn their work more quickly and have a better head for management. Another came out as a penniless chemist's assistant, and in half a dozen years has a successful apothecary's shop of his own in Tasmania: while a fourth was a solicitor's clerk, and after a few years of fearful ups and downs boasts of his comfortable berth in Sydney. This man however had ability, and had been earning two hundred pounds a year as a managing clerk in England. Whether he lost his place, or whether it was poor health that brought him to the Colonies, I cannot say; but his experience shows how essential it is that even a skilled clerk should not be afraid to turn to rough work for a time when that seems the only means of making a livelihood. This man landed in New Zealand with only ten pounds. The person to whom he had an introduction would have nothing to do with him. (Take what introductions you can, but don't count these chickens before they are hatched.) He succeeded in getting a clerk's place at twenty shillings a week; then he went into the bush "clearing" at ten shillings a week and keep. He also did fencing and managed horses, and eventually got a job cutting tussocks (a long stiff grass that cumbers the ground) at thirty shillings a week and food. Then he came to Sydney, and found an opportunity of resuming his old law work, first at two pounds, then at six pounds a week as managing clerk. He spoke with pride of his experiences, and with pleasure and satisfaction of his present position; and yet he felt it would be difficult to advise others to come out, especially at that time (three years ago) when the Colony was undergoing a period of depression.

Another instructive example of a member of the class under consideration, is that of a young draughtsman in an architect's office who had been earning two guineas a week in England. He started one spring for Canada, with several introductions. Six weeks were vainly spent in and around Toronto in search of work, not only with architects but with engineers and in the building trade generally—the only offer being one of twenty-five shillings a week which he declined. After further considerable disappointment at Ottawa, he at length obtained a week's work as draughtsman to a civil engineer, earning three guineas; but this work led to more, and for the next six months he obtained nearly continuous employment, though from different employers, mostly civil engineers, sometimes architects, at a salary of three to four guineas a week; but then the winter set in, and for more than two months he got no work at all.

This is but an instance of the great uncertainty and irregularity of this class of work in the Colonies, especially for new comers; and also of the necessity of adapting one's self to new kinds of work, for he was only an amateur at engineering—with a good knowledge of it his earnings would have been more—and though primarily engaged on indoor work, he had when up-country to do any rough work that might be set him, such as loading sledges or chaining for the engineers. Though domestic circumstances led to his return to England, he speaks alike disapprovingly of the roughness of the people, and approvingly of the possibilities for a young man in a new country. There is not the same regularity of employment,—you are taken on and sent off just as you are wanted or not—and the long winter is a great drawback; a man therefore of this sort ought to have some means to fall back upon unless he is willing to turn common labourer. But on the other hand there are proportionately far greater openings

than in England, and there is less division of labour in the professions, just as in his case draughting in a civil engineer's office was open, as in practice it would not be in England, to an architect's draughtsman. The salary for corresponding work is at least fifty per cent. higher than in England, and withal, the living no dearer, indeed cheaper than in London, for he boarded at Ottawa for seventeen shillings a week, with three good meat meals a day, and a bedroom to himself.

Clerks, the professional classes, and such like are warned against emigration, especially if they have not fair funds behind them; but still if they will go, there are not a few who will soon be able to give a good account of themselves, and there is certainly not the same terrible competition that there is in this country where if a place is vacant, fifty equally good men might perhaps be found to fill it. And so if a clerk is taken on, say in Canada, he has the satisfaction of feeling that he really is wanted; and if he is worth anything at all, he would get his ten or twelve dollars a week. Such men should also be on the look out for casual occupations which are to be found in the new country as well as the old, though these perhaps fall more in the way of old settlers than of new comers. It might only raise false hopes to suggest any such casual occupations. People want their wits about them as much in the new country as in the old, and when once there those wits will stand them in far better stead than any amount of suggestions from a magazine article.

For a pushing, energetic man, who does not mind, at least for a time, the rough and lonely life of a real up-country settlement, and who has a little capital behind him, it has always seemed to me that to start a store in a new district that is being opened up will usually be found a career of much promise whether in Canada or Australia. Care of course must be taken in the choice of locality, and the time for making the start. New settlers must be supplied with the ordinary necessaries of life, and if need be they will pay a good price for them. The trade at first may not be very large, and for a time the shopkeeper may barely make a living out of it; but as the community grows his business will grow also, and in time he will probably find himself one of the leading citizens of a settled and populous community, which has grown up around him in a way that at first would have seemed incredible. In Australia and New Zealand, I was constantly finding that the mayor of a town, or other local leader, the owner of a large and flourishing store, had many years before been one of the first settlers of the little community, having begun life with a diminutive store in tent or shanty, in the manner above described. Of course it may be said that there is not now the same opportunity for this sort of thing that there used to be in the earlier and rapid stages of colonial growth. No doubt in some measure this is so, for the colonies are largely settled and the wants of the colonists already supplied; and the wants of new settlers are, owing to good communication, supplied more readily than they used to be. But for all that there is a constant expansion going on in our colonies, new roads and railways being made, and new country being opened up. And it is just this feature of the colonies which gives a man a better chance of making a living than in the old country. The colonies afford scope for improvement and development which is not to be found at home, and hence steady and energetic men may make headway in a manner which falls only to the lot of the really brilliant and able, or the fortunate men at home.

There is also another feature of colonial life which is of the utmost importance in this connection, namely that a man can do things there which his social position would hardly justify his doing in England according to our present ideas. It might be that many a young man, unwilling to eat the bread of idleness, could earn something in this country by manual labour, by becoming a milk-dealer or policeman, or by setting up a shop in a rising suburb, and he personally might be willing to do so; but what would his friends say to all this? As a matter of fact he could not do it in England; in the Colonies he can. And then again the pursuit that a man takes up in England seems to some extent to stamp his character for life. It is not so in the Colonies: a man may readily pass from some inferior occupation to one that our world considers more honourable and respectable; and there are among the wealthy merchants and even among the Cabinet Ministers of Australasia men who in their day have worked as labourers or in the gold fields.

Throughout this paper, the intention has been to speak of our self-governing Colonies in general, and not to venture on the task of pointing out their rival merits. This would be a task of much delicacy and difficulty, would require very minute and

special knowledge, and much of what might be said would be liable to variation according to the fluctuations in the respective Colonies. And after all in spite of certain differences, both temporary and permanent, the main features of the Australasian Colonies are similar, and one might go further and say that after all it is much the same problem that awaits the new emigrant in any colony, whether he be a "greenhorn" in Canada or a "new chum" in Australasia.¹ But it may be well to draw a few distinctions, as they appear to me, between these two great fields for emigration.

CANADA AND AUSTRALIA AS FIELDS FOR EMIGRATION.

Canada is much more accessible than Australia, the voyage taking about ten days as against, say, forty to fifty days to various Australasian ports; and the voyage to Australia by sailing-ship would of course be much longer. The cost of the passage is therefore much less, the steerage fare being at present £4, as against £14 to £17 to Australasian ports. But the land journeys in Canada are likely to be longer and more expensive; it would take, for instance, nearly half as much to get from London to Winnipeg (£6 10s.), as from London to Sydney.

Canada seems on the whole to offer better chances of immediate employment, especially to the working classes, than does Australia, though the ultimate prosperity of an Australian emigrant is quite as certain if not more so. Perhaps this greater demand may be due in part to the proximity of the United States, and in part to the rapid development of the North West, but it unquestionably exists at the present time.

Canada also seems to offer greater hospitality to the immigrant in that there are Government immigration agents at the ports and all the principal towns, whose duty it is to supply immigrants of all classes with the fullest information and to endeavour to secure them employment. In fact, these agencies are like large official labour *bureaux*. Except in Queensland, there is now nothing of this kind in Australia, though the remnants of such offices may be found in New South Wales and New Zealand.

On the other hand, the period of the year during which emigration to Canada is advisable is very limited, extending only from the opening of navigation in the St. Lawrence river towards the end of April to July or, at the latest, August. The reason for this being that the long, hard winters of Canada greatly check all outdoor work, and it is well to make provision for them by many months of summer labour. The long winters are in themselves a drawback, as they greatly interfere with regular employment. There is practically nothing of this kind in the Australasian colonies, and no season in the year in which it is unsuitable to arrive in them; though for preference, an emigrant would do well to arrive in any of the three spring months of September, October, and November; and to avoid arriving in the great heat of mid-summer, especially in the hot Colony of Queensland and the northern parts of New South Wales.

It is to be hoped that no Colonial will take offence by my saying that Australia certainly strikes a traveller as much more English than Canada, and New Zealand as more English than Australia.

There are a multitude of other questions upon which a would-be emigrant would wish for information, which have not been alluded to here—such as the rate of wages, the cost of living, the necessary outfit, the Colonies in which for the time being there is most activity, and such-like. But it would seem almost a waste of space to go into any detail on these matters in a magazine article, when such full and careful information about them is given in the publications of the Emigrants' Information Office at 31 Broadway, Westminster. Circulars are issued quarterly free of charge, and once a year a penny handbook is issued for each of the ten colonies, and a further handbook (price 3d.) giving information as to professional employment in the Colonies. In addition to this, special enquiries are invited, either in person or by letter, and will be answered as far as possible.

THE COST OF LIVING.

A few words as to cost of living. Meat is cheaper than in England, especially in Australia, where mutton may be bought as low as twopence a pound, and the best

¹ Not having visited the Cape I do not speak of it, but apparently its material prosperity is now making a fresh start.

joints are rarely as much as sixpence ; most other kinds of plain food and groceries are about the same price ; luxuries are in general dearer. House-rent in large towns is almost always dearer, and even in small towns is not cheap. Good board for rough men can be had, say, from 15s. to 25s. a week, and is on the whole cheaper in Canada than Australia. Clothing is in general somewhat dearer, especially in protected Colonies such as Victoria. The cheapness of living, especially in country districts is, therefore, one great advantage of Colonial life. It must, however, be borne in mind that whatever may be the relative prices of provisions the working man's standard of comfort is considerably higher in the Colonies, and this tends to raise the cost of living. This remark would not apply to the same extent to the middle classes. On the contrary, the fact that it is easier for them to live in a more humble way than in England, is one reason why a middle-class family may gain by emigration.

It has been suggested why should not many families who now for economy's sake live abroad, emigrate to our colonies. Even supposing the father found no means of earning anything, the following advantages might in most cases be expected to follow : They would be citizens of the country they lived in and would take part in its public affairs. Their capital judiciously invested would bring them a larger income. There would be greater opportunities of advancement in life for the children of the family, both sons and daughters. In many cases the change of climate would prove a great gain to the health of the family or some member of it. It is true the parents might not like in middle life to relinquish the quieter ways and habits of the old world for the go-a-headness, and in some cases privations, of the new. But if this is considered a sacrifice it may be one worth making for their children's sake, and there seems much to be said for the suggestion ; but the responsibility of advising the emigration of whole families is so great that I dare not press it. Indeed this paper has been written with considerable reluctance ; for striking as is the material prosperity of the Colonies, and striking as is the success of hundreds of emigrants that have come under my notice, one knows that there are failures and disappointments—due often no doubt to the emigrants themselves—that there is home-sickness and that there are hardships ; and the curse of a disappointed emigrant is hardly outweighed by the blessing of a dozen successful ones. But one has to overcome the reluctance, give the best and fairest statement that one can of the prospects of an emigrant and face the responsibility.

EMIGRATION NOT EXPATRIATION.

One word more before concluding. The greater the age of the emigrant, the greater no doubt will he feel the contrast with the old home life, and the more slowly will he adapt himself to the new ; but for old or young there is no such thing as expatriation. If there is one fact that strikes a visitor to the Colonies more than another—and it is a fact he ought widely to publish when speaking of emigration—it is that the Colonies, more especially the Australasian, have reproduced English life and thought and custom, as faithfully as in the altered surroundings it was possible. The thought continually crosses one in Melbourne in Sydney or in Christchurch :—" Surely I am in England. The churches and public buildings, the trains, and public conveyances, the houses and the shops, the rooms within, and the sights and sounds of the street without ; above all the people, their language, their dress, their manners, their customs, religion, and institutions, are just the same as I should find in any large provincial town at home." True in the country the visitor would find some things different both in nature and in the works of man ; but in the town almost the only thing that wakes him from his dream, and reminds him he is twelve thousand miles from home—is that there is a bright warm sun over head, travelling from right to left, and that it shines upon a population among whom he sees no wretchedness and no want ; and his heart as well as his body is gladdened and warmed in consequence. Surely to move from the old world to such a new world as this cannot rightly be termed expatriation.