

CHAPTER IV

NEW BRITAIN.—THE COLONY OVER-SEA.

We now come to the third and final stage of the regenerative process. The Colony Over-Sea. To mention Over-Sea is sufficient with some people to damn the Scheme. A prejudice against emigration has been diligently fostered in certain quarters by those who have openly admitted that they did not wish to deplete the ranks of the Army of Discontent at home, for the more discontented people you have here the more trouble you can give the Government, and the more power you have to bring about the general overturn, which is the only thing in which they see any hope for the future. Some again object to emigration on the ground that it is transportation. I confess that I have great sympathy with those who object to emigration as carried on hitherto, and if it be a consolation to any of my critics I may say at once that so far from compulsorily expatriating any Englishman I shall refuse to have any part or lot in emigrating any man or woman who does not voluntarily wish to be sent out.

A journey over sea is a very different thing now to what it was when a voyage to Australia consumed more than six months, when emigrants were crowded by hundreds into sailing ships, and scenes of abominable sin and brutality were the normal incidents of the passage. The world has grown much smaller since the electric telegraph was discovered and side by side with the shrinkage of this planet under the influence of steam and electricity there has come a sense of brotherhood and a consciousness of community of interest and of nationality on the part of the English-speaking people throughout the world. To change from Devon to Australia is not such a change in many respects as merely to cross over from Devon to Normandy. In Australia the Emigrant finds himself among men and women of the same habits, the same language, and in fact the same people, excepting that they live under the southern cross instead

of in the northern latitudes. The reduction of the postage between England and the Colonies, a reduction which I hope will soon be followed by the establishment of the Universal Penny Post between the English speaking lands, will further tend to lessen the sense of distance.

The constant travelling of the Colonists backwards and forwards to England makes it absurd to speak of the Colonies as if they were a foreign land. They are simply pieces of Britain distributed about the world, enabling the Britisher to have access to the richest parts of the earth.

Another objection which will be taken to this Scheme is that colonists already over sea will see with infinite alarm the prospect of the transfer of our waste labour to their country. It is easy to understand how this misconception will arise, but there is not much danger of opposition on this score. The working-men who rule the roost at Melbourne object to the introduction of fresh workmen into their labour market, for the same reason that the new Dockers' Union objects to the appearance of new hands at the dock gates, that is for fear the newcomers will enter into unfriendly competition with them. But no Colony, not even the Protectionist and Trade Unionists who govern Victoria, could rationally object to the introduction of trained Colonists planted out upon the land. They would see that these men would become a source of wealth, simply because they would at once become producers as well as consumers, and instead of cutting down wages they would tend directly to improve trade and so increase the employment of the workmen now in the Colony. Emigration as hitherto conducted has been carried out on directly opposite principles to these. Men and women have simply been shot down into countries without any regard to their possession of ability to earn a livelihood, and have consequently become an incubus upon the energies of the community, and a discredit, expense, and burden. The result is that they gravitate to the towns and compete with the colonial workmen, and thereby drive down wages. We shall avoid that mistake. We need not wonder that Australians and other Colonists should object to their countries being converted into a sort of dumping ground, on which to deposit men and women totally unsuited for the new circumstances in which they find themselves.

Moreover, looking at it from the aspect of the class itself, would such emigration be of any enduring value? It is not

merely more favourable circumstances that are required by these crowds, but those habits of industry, truthfulness, and self-restraint, which will enable them to profit by better conditions if they could only come to possess them. According to the most reliable information there are already sadly too many of the same classes we want to help in countries supposed to be the paradise of the working-man.

What could be done with a people whose first enquiry on reaching a foreign land would be for a whisky shop, and who were utterly ignorant of those forms of labour and habits of industry absolutely indispensable to the earning of a subsistence amid the hardships of an Emigrant's life? Such would naturally shrink from the self-denial the new circumstances inevitably called for, and rather than suffer the inconveniences connected with a settler's life, would probably sink down into helpless despair, or settle in the slums of the first city they came to.

These difficulties, in my estimation, bar the way to the emigration on any considerable scale of the "submerged tenth," and yet I am strongly of opinion, with the majority of those who have thought and written on political economy, that emigration is the only remedy for this mighty evil. Now, the Over-Sea Colony plan, I think, meets these difficulties :—

- (1) In the preparation of the Colony for the people.
- (2) In the preparation of the people for the Colony.
- (3) In the arrangements that are rendered possible for the transport of the people when prepared.

It is proposed to secure a large tract of land in some country suitable to our purpose. We have thought of South Africa, to begin with. We are in no way pledged to this part of the world, or to it alone. There is nothing to prevent our establishing similar settlements in Canada, Australia, or some other land. British Columbia has been strongly urged upon our notice. Indeed, it is certain if this Scheme proves the success we anticipate, the first Colony will be the forerunner of similar communities elsewhere. Africa, however, presents to us great advantages for the moment. There is any amount of land suitable for our purpose which can be obtained, we think, without difficulty. The climate is healthy. Labour is in great demand, so that if by any means work failed on the Colony, there would be abundant opportunities for securing good wages from the neighbouring Companies.

SECTION 1.—THE COLONY AND THE COLONISTS.

Before any decision is arrived at, however, information will be obtained as to the position and character of the land; the accessibility of markets for commodities; communication with Europe, and other necessary particulars.

The next business would be to obtain on grant, or otherwise, a sufficient tract of suitable country for the purpose of a Colony, on conditions that would meet its present and future character.

After obtaining a title to the country, the next business will be to effect a settlement in it. This, I suppose, will be accomplished by sending a competent body of men under skilled supervision to fix on a suitable location for the first settlement, erecting such buildings as would be required, enclosing and breaking up the land, putting in first crops, and so storing sufficient supplies of food for the future.

Then a supply of Colonists would be sent out to join them, and from time to time other detachments, as the Colony was prepared to receive them. Further locations could then be chosen, and more country broken up, and before a very long period has passed the Colony would be capable of receiving and absorbing a continuous stream of emigration of considerable proportions.

The next work would be the establishment of a strong and efficient government, prepared to carry out and enforce the same laws and discipline to which the Colonists had been accustomed in England, together with such alterations and additions as the new circumstances would render necessary.

The Colonists would become responsible for all that concerned their own support; that is to say, they would buy and sell, engage in trade, hire servants, and transact all the ordinary business affairs of every-day life.

Our Headquarters in England would represent the Colony in this country on their behalf, and with money supplied by them, when once fairly established, would buy for their agents what they were at

the outset unable to produce themselves, such as machinery and the like, also selling their produce to the best advantage.

All land, timber, minerals, and the like, would be rented to the Colonists, all unearned increments, and improvements on the land, would be held on behalf of the entire community, and utilised for its general advantages, a certain percentage being set apart for the extension of its borders, and the continued transmission of Colonists from England in increasing numbers.

Arrangements would be made for the temporary accommodation of new arrivals, Officers being maintained for the purpose of taking them in hand on landing and directing and controlling them generally. So far as possible, they would be introduced to work without any waste of time, situations being ready for them to enter upon; and any way, their wants would be supplied till this was the case.

There would be friends who would welcome and care for them, not merely on the principle of profit and loss, but on the ground of friendship and religion, many of whom the emigrants would probably have known before in the old country, together with all the social influences, restraints, and religious enjoyments to which the Colonists have been accustomed.

After dealing with the preparation of the Colony for the Colonists, we now come to the preparation of the

COLONISTS FOR THE COLONY OVER-SEA.

They would be prepared by an education in honesty, truth, and industry, without which we could not indulge in any hope of their succeeding. While men and women would be received into the City Colony without character, none would be sent over the sea who had not been proved worthy of this trust.

They would be inspired with an ambition to do well for themselves and their fellow Colonists.

They would be instructed in all that concerned their future career.

They would be taught those industries in which they would be most profitably employed.

They would be inured to the hardships they would have to endure.

They would be accustomed to the economies they would have to practise.

They would be made acquainted with the comrades with whom they would have to live and labour.

They would be accustomed to the Government, Orders, and Regulations which they would have to obey.

They would be educated, so far as the opportunity served, in those habits of patience, forbearance, and affection which would so largely tend to their own welfare, and to the successful carrying out of this part of our Scheme.

TRANSPORT TO THE COLONY OVER-SEA.

We now come to the question of transport. This certainly has an element of difficulty in it, if the remedy is to be applied on a very large scale. But this will appear of less importance if we consider :—

That the largeness of the number will reduce the individual cost. Emigrants can be conveyed to such a location in South Africa, as we have in view, by ones and twos at £8 per head, including land journey ; and, no doubt, were a large number carried, this figure would be reduced considerably.

Many of the Colonists would have friends who would assist them with the cost of passage money and outfit.

All the unmarried will have earned something on the City and Farm Colonies, which will go towards meeting their passage money. In the course of time relatives, who are comfortably settled in the Colony, will save money, and assist their kindred in getting out to them. We have the examples before our eyes in Australia and the United States of how those countries have in this form absorbed from Europe millions of poor struggling people.

All Colonists and emigrants generally will bind themselves in a legal instrument to repay all monies, expenses of passage, outfit, or otherwise, which would in turn be utilised in sending out further contingents.

On the plan named, if prudently carried out, and generously assisted, the transfer of the entire surplus population of this country is not only possible, but would, we think, in process of time, be effected with enormous advantage to the people themselves, to this country, and the country of their adoption. The history of Australia and the United States evidences this. It is quite true the first settlers in the latter were people superior in every way for such an enterprise to the bulk of those we propose to send out. But it is equally true that large numbers of the most ignorant and vicious of our European populations have been pouring into that country ever since without affecting its prosperity, and this Colony Over-Sea would have the immense advantage at the outset which would come from a government and discipline carefully adapted to its peculiar circumstances, and rigidly enforced in every particular.

I would guard against misconception in relation to this Colony Over-Sea by pointing out that all my proposals here are necessarily tentative and experimental. There is no intention on my part to stick to any of these suggestions if, on maturer consideration and consultation with practical men, they can be improved upon. Mr. Arnold White, who has already conducted two parties of Colonists to South Africa, is one of the few men in this country who has had practical experience of the actual difficulties of colonisation. I have, through a mutual friend, had the advantage of comparing notes with him very fully, and I venture to believe that there is nothing in this Scheme that is not in harmony with the result of his experience. In a couple of months this book will be read all over the world. It will bring me a plentiful crop of suggestions, and, I hope, offers of service from many valuable and experienced Colonists in every country. In the due order of things the Colony Over-Sea is the last to be started. Long before our first batch of Colonists is ready to cross the ocean I shall be in a position to correct and revise the proposals of this chapter by the best wisdom and matured experience of the practical men of every Colony in the Empire.

SECTION 2.—UNIVERSAL EMIGRATION.

We have in our remarks on the Over-Sea Colony referred to the general consensus of opinion on the part of those who have studied the Social Question as to Emigration being the only remedy for the overcrowded population of this country, at the same time showing some of the difficulties which lie in the way of the adoption of the remedy; the dislike of the people to so great a change as is involved in going from one country to another; the cost of their transfer, and their general unfitness for an emigrant's life. These difficulties, as I think we have seen, are fully met by the Over-Sea Colony Scheme. But, apart from those who, driven by their abject poverty, will avail themselves of our Scheme, there are multitudes of people all over the country who would be likely to emigrate could they be assisted in so doing. Those we propose to help in the following manner :—

1. By opening a Bureau in London, and appointing Officers whose business it will be to acquire every kind of information as to suitable countries, their adaptation to, and the openings they present for different trades and callings, the possibility of obtaining land and employment, the rates of remuneration, and the like. These enquiries will include the cost of passage-money, railway fares, outfit, together with every kind of information required by an emigrant.

2. From this Bureau any one may obtain all necessary information.

3. Special terms will be arranged with steamships, railway companies, and land agents, of which emigrants using the Bureau will have the advantage.

4. Introductions will be supplied, as far as possible, to agents and friends in the localities to which the emigrant may be proceeding.

5. Intending emigrants, desirous of saving money, can deposit it through this Bureau in the Army Bank for that purpose.

6. It is expected that government contractors and other employers of labour requiring Colonists of reliable character will apply to this Bureau for such, offering favourable terms with respect to passage-money, employment, and other advantages.

7. No emigrant will be sent out in response to any application from abroad where the emigrant's expenses are defrayed, without references as to character, industry, and fitness.

This Bureau, we think, will be especially useful to women and young girls. There must be a large number of such in this country living in semi-starvation, anyway, with very poor prospects, who would be very welcome abroad, the expense of whose transfer governments, and masters and mistresses alike would be very glad to defray, or assist in defraying, if they could only be assured on both sides of the beneficial character of the arrangements when made.

So widespread now are the operations of the Army, and so extensively will this Bureau multiply its agencies that it will speedily be able to make personal enquiries on both sides, that is in the interest alike of the emigrant and the intended employer in any part of the world.

SECTION 3.—THE SALVATION SHIP.

When we have selected a party of emigrants whom we believe to be sufficiently prepared to settle on the land which has been got ready for them in the Colony over Sea, it will be no dismal expatriation which will await them. No one who has ever been on the West Coast of Ireland when the emigrants were departing, and has heard the dismal wails which arise from those who are taking leave of each other for the last time on earth, can fail to sympathise with the horror excited in many minds by the very word emigration. But when our party sets out, there will be no violent wrenching of home ties. In our ship we shall export them all—father, mother, and children. The individuals will be grouped in families, and the families will, on the Farm Colony, have been for some months past more or less near neighbours, meeting each other in the field, in the workshops, and in the Religious Services. It will resemble nothing so much as the unmooring of a little piece of England, and towing it across the sea to find a safe anchorage in a sunnier clime. The ship which takes out emigrants will bring back the produce of the farms, and constant travelling to and fro will lead more than ever to the feeling that we and our ocean-sundered brethren are members of one family.

No one who has ever crossed the ocean can have failed to be impressed with the mischief that comes to emigrants when they are on their way to their destination. Many and many a girl has dated her downfall from the temptations which beset her while journeying to a land where she had hoped to find a happier future

“Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,” and he must have his hands full on board an emigrant ship. Look into the steerage at any time, and you will find boredom inexpressible on every face. The men have nothing to do, and an incident of no more importance than the appearance of a sail upon the distant

horizon is an event which makes the whole ship talk. I do not see why this should be so. Of course, in the case of conveying passengers and freight, with the utmost possible expedition, for short distances, it would be idle to expect that either time or energies could be spared for the employment or instruction of the passengers. But the case is different when, instead of going to America, the emigrant turns his face to South Africa or remote Australia. Then, even with the fastest steamers, they must remain some weeks or months upon the high seas. The result is that habits of idleness are contracted, bad acquaintances are formed, and very often the moral and religious work of a lifetime is undone.

To avoid these evil consequences, I think we should be compelled to have a ship of our own as soon as possible. A sailing vessel might be found the best adapted for the work. Leaving out the question of time, which would be of very secondary importance with us, the construction of a sailing ship would afford more space for the accommodation of emigrants and for industrial occupation, and would involve considerably less working expenses, besides costing very much less at the onset, even if we did not have one given to us, which I should think would be very probable.

All the emigrants would be under the charge of Army Officers, and instead of the voyage being demoralising, it would be made instructive and profitable. From leaving London to landing at their destination, every colonist would be under watchful oversight, could receive instruction in those particulars where they were still needing it, and be subjected to influences that would be beneficial every way.

Then we have seen that one of the great difficulties in the direction of emigration is the cost of transport. The expense of conveying a man from England to Australia, occupying as it does some seven or eight weeks, arises not so much from the expense connected with the working of the vessel which carries him, as the amount of provisions he consumes during the passage. Now, with this plan I think that the emigrants might be made to earn at least a portion of this outlay. There is no reason why a man should not work on board ship any more than on land. Of course, nothing much could be done when the weather was very rough; but the average number of days during which it would be impossible for passengers to employ themselves profitably in the time spent

between the Channel and Cape Town or Australia would be comparatively few.

When the ship was pitching or rolling, work would be difficult; but even then, when the Colonists get their sea-legs, and are free from the qualmishness which overtakes landmen when first getting afloat, I cannot see why they should not engage in some form of industrial work far more profitable than yawning and lounging about the deck, to say nothing of the fact that by so doing they would lighten the expense of their transit. The sailors, firemen, engineers, and everybody else connected with a vessel have to work, and there is no reason why our Colonists should not work also.

Of course, this method would require special arrangements in the fitting up of the vessel, which, if it were our own, it would not be difficult to make. At first sight it may seem difficult to find employments on board ship which could be engaged in to advantage, and it might not be found possible to fix up every individual right away; but I think there would be very few of the class and character of people we should take out, with the prior instructions they would have received, who would not have fitted themselves into some useful labour before the voyage ended.

To begin with, there would be a large amount of the ordinary ship's work that the Colonists could perform, such as the preparation of food, serving it out, cleaning the decks and fittings of the ship generally, together with the loading and unloading of cargo. All these operations could be readily done under the direction of permanent hands. Then shoemaking, knitting, sewing, tailoring, and other kindred occupations could be engaged in. I should think sewing-machines could be worked, and, one way or another, any amount of garments could be manufactured, which would find ready and profitable sale on landing, either among the Colonists themselves, or with the people round about.

Not only would the ship thus be a perfect hive of industry, it would also be a floating temple. The Captain, Officers, and every member of the crew would be Salvationists, and all, therefore, alike interested in the enterprise. Moreover, the probabilities are that we should obtain the service of the ship's officers and crew in the most inexpensive manner, in harmony with the usages of the Army everywhere else, men serving from love and not as a mere business. The effect produced by our ship cruising slowly southwards

testifying to the reality of a Salvation for both worlds, calling at all convenient ports, would constitute a new kind of mission work, and drawing out everywhere a large amount of warm practical sympathy. At present the influence of those who go down to the sea in ships is not always in favour of raising the morals and religion of the dwellers in the places where they come. Here, however, would be one ship at least whose appearance foretold no disorder, gave rise to no debauchery, and from whose capacious hull would stream forth an Army of men, who, instead of thronging the grog-shops and other haunts of licentious indulgence, would occupy themselves with explaining and proclaiming the religion of the Love of God and the Brotherhood of Man.
