

## THE EMIGRATION MOVEMENT IN LONDON

Capitalists and theorists may discern many objections to emigration; but the working man may some day solve the problem for himself. If he has not the means to pay for his passage, and no one will come forward to help him, he may be compelled to stay at home, even though he finds himself and his family brought down to the brink of starvation. But all may not be so helpless, and perhaps at some future time the starving family may experience a return of employment, the wages so earned furnishing ultimately the means of emigration. How this subject is ripening in the minds of the working classes of the metropolis may be judged by what has transpired in the ecclesiastical district of St. Paul's, Clerkenwell. No church has yet been erected in this district; but the incumbent, the Rev. A. Styleman Herring, makes use of the school building in the meantime as the centre of his operations, pending the necessary help from the Bishop of London's Fund. The population is 8000, and is of a very mixed industrial character. The crash of 1866 was severely felt in that locality, and the ensuing winter was one of much suffering. Matters are rather better now; but the people seem conscious of a risk lest the tide should again ebb.

The school building to which we have referred, situated in Allen-street, Goswell Road, has been made to do duty not only as a church and as a place of juvenile education, but also as a sort of reading-room and library. About a dozen working men constituted a discussion class, and among other topics they hit upon that of 'emigration'. The more they discussed the question - and it seems they went into it at considerable length - the more interested they became; but finding their acquaintance with the subject somewhat limited, they applied to Mr. Herring to assist them in getting further information. The rev. gentleman at once entered cordially into their views, and took the requisite steps, as far as was practical to supply their wants. Suitable books and news papers were obtained, as well as the aid of some qualified lecturers. In the lecturing department the Rev. C. H. Stewart, a London clergyman who had personal knowledge of Canada, was particularly serviceable. A large tea meeting was held, and the result was a 'unanimous vote' in favour of emigration to Canada.

About this time one man, engaged in the clock and watch trade, was so impressed with the benefits accruing from emigration, that he started on an experimental trip to Canada, leaving his wife and family at home to abide the result. Arrived at Montreal, he immediately obtained employment, and soon afterwards acquired a partnership in some small business. He is now saving money to fetch out his wife and family, who will doubtless rejoice in his return. The subject of emigration being thus fairly brought before the notice of the people, it assumed a practical shape by the formation of an emigration fund. This arrangement dates from the 4th of August last. The Rev. R. Hitchman, curate of the district, acts as secretary, and takes a hearty interest in the proceedings, the incumbent being the president and treasurer.

The plan of operation is as follows:— A block of land is to be obtained in Canada, and on this land a regular settlement is to be formed, to be called 'New Clerkenwell'. When the block is secured it is to be divided into allotments of 5, 10, 20, and 40 acres or upwards. Parties wishing to emigrate and to occupy plots of this land are to subscribe to the fund on a certain scale. For a 5-acre allotment the subscription is 3d. per week; for a 10-acre lot, 6d. per week; for 20 acres, 1s. per week; for 40 acres, 2s. per week; and for larger lots in the same ratio. A small entrance-fee is required, ranging from 3d. to 2s.; in aid of the working expenses. With the exception of the entrance-fee, each depositor may have his subscriptions returned, on giving one week's notice in writing. Those who wish their contributions to accumulate more rapidly can subscribe to a special fund for that purpose.

On the basis of this scheme 284 persons (some of them females) are now paying in their subscriptions. It is remarkable, that these 284 persons represent no less than 89 trades, proving, therefore, how wide-spread has been the distress of the working classes, and how general is the feeling in favour of emigration. The most extensive class are the carpenters, who amount to 28. Labourers appear as 23. Boot and shoe makers are 13; smiths, 12; agricultural labourers, 11; printers (not compositors), 11; bricklayers, 10; painters, 9; porters, 9; engineers, 8; engine fitters, 5; sawyers, 5; jewellers, 5; domestic servants, 4; tinmen, 4; bookbinders, 4; cabinetmakers, 4; plumbers, 3; tailors, 3; clerks, 3; miscellaneous, 23. All the other distinct occupations comprehend only one or two individuals. Among these we have two 'valentine makers', a milliner, two dress-makers, a chimneysweep, a farmer, a watch-maker, a bill-poster, a fishmonger, two pianoforte-makers, a shipwright, a schoolmaster, &c.

In this list we include the members of a branch society established about two months ago, at Plumstead, in the vicinity of Woolwich. The title of the parent association is the 'Church Emigration and Colonisation Society', but it is by no means limited to members of the Church of England, neither is the sphere of its action necessarily confined to the district where it originated.

It should be observed that the majority of the subscribers are heads of families, so that the number of individuals interested in the movement cannot be less than a thousand. The cost of transferring an adult from London to Toronto will, probably, be about £7. Application has already been made to the Ontario Government for a grant of 40,000 acres of land on behalf of this society. The money received during the brief period the association has been at work consists of entrance fees, £8 6s. 3d.; donations, £2 10s.; collected, 5s. 7d.; and weekly subscriptions, £63 7s. Members have been paid off to the extent of £3 19s. 6d., leaving £59 7s. 6d. in the bank.

It is intended to send out a pioneer party of about twelve to twenty men next April, who are to construct a few log-houses, prepare a provision depot, and make other preliminary arrangements. It must, however, be obvious to all parties that many of the subscribers are totally unfit to occupy land. Still in one way or the other, there is a market for all the labour that Clerkenwell, or even all London, can send to Canada. It is very likely that in practice the scheme will have to undergo several modifications. Nevertheless, the project is full of promise, and will doubtless come into proper shape as the work goes on. Other parties are to follow the pioneer force, 'as may be deemed desirable'. The fact is, they may follow as fast as the money can send them, provided they go to the right place and attempt the right thing. The earlier they start after the winter is over the better.

Our remarks are perhaps somewhat anticipated by the 7th section of the society's plan, which says:— *Agents to be appointed at Quebec, Toronto, and perhaps Montreal, or other places, to receive the parties sent out. Offers of suitable employment might also be made through them.* This is in some sense a saving clause, and may be expected to operate extensively. A labourer capable of turning his hand to farming work might go out to Canada, and after working as a farm servant for a couple of years, would find himself able - both in regard to means and experience - to enter on the occupation of a free grant of land. Thus, in the course of a few years, an agricultural labourer - who in England has scarcely any prospect but the workhouse - might find himself the prosperous possessor of a farm entirely his own. If, instead of the surplus population of our agricultural districts overflowing almost wholly into the large towns, a fair proportion were to betake themselves to the provinces of Canada, these emigrants would rise into prosperous men, and our great towns would not contain such a mass of struggling industry. The swelling ranks of pauperism would no longer be recruited at so tremendous a rate, and a great social danger would be averted.

But for the present it seems we must be content to let the emigration movement develop itself in the towns; and it is certainly an unfortunate thing that the Canadian Government has no emigration agent in the metropolis. Mr. Dixon, the sole emigration agent for the Canadian Government, is stationed at Wolverhampton, and consequently can exercise but little influence on the movement which is going forward in London, though it is satisfactory to know that this gentleman has paid a visit to Clerkenwell, and has expressed his gratification at the efforts of the St. Paul's Society.

We have on several occasions referred in these columns to the success which has attended the operations of the East-end Emigration and Relief Society, having its headquarters in Poplar. In regard to efforts in aid of emigration, it needs no argument to prove how safely and beneficially the public may here bestow their benevolence. The 'abuse of charity' is scarcely possible, where the contributions are given in support of a well-managed emigration fund. The benefit is twofold. It helps those who emigrate, and it lessens the difficulties of those who remain behind. The benefaction keeps no man in idleness, but helps to deliver men from that idleness which is enforced by circumstances. If those who have the means will foster this movement, the greatest amount of good, with the least possible amount of injury, will be the result as regards the industry of the country. Those families who go abroad will be customers for our home manufactures, and while they build up our colonies they will indirectly nourish the mother country.

We may also hope that the clergy and others, who take a practical interest in the state of the working classes, will endeavour to form societies similar to that of Mr. Herring and Mr. Hitchman in Clerkenwell. It is an interesting sight to witness a hundred and fifty persons, or thereabouts, flocking to the schoolroom, on Tuesday evenings, to pay in their emigration subscriptions. The payments made, the company sit down, while the Rev. Mr. Hitchman reads to them the latest information relating to Canada. After the information has been laid before them questions are probably asked, or observations are made, and no small amount of shrewdness and intelligence characterises the remarks thus emanating from the audience. In reference to the alleged frequency with which Canadian emigrants pass over the boundary line and enter into the United States, we may observe that all the subscribers to the Clerkenwell fund have pledged themselves to remain in Canada. But, independently of any promise, we believe there is little probability of English emigrants passing out of British territory if the Canadian emigration department is only properly organised and does its duty.