

Comparative Colonization.

CIVILIZATION moves quickly. The increased facilities for rapid communication by the shortening of distance and time have bound nations and countries more closely together. The government of men and the direction of civilization are no longer restricted in their progress by the limited experience of one country assisted by the wider history of the past; but, with the aid of method and skilful management, each can now learn and profit by the contemporary experiences of the rest.

We have not, as yet, accustomed our eyes to the wider range of vision, but important steps have already been taken in this direction, and gradually we can feel our way to take full advantage of the opportunities thus brought within our reach.

At a meeting of the Imperial Institute held in London last December, to discuss what steps could be taken to carry out the ideas suggested in a paper recently read before that august body by Mr. Ilbert, upon the motion of the Lord Chancellor a resolution was passed to the effect "That it is expedient to establish a Society of Comparative Legislation with the object of promoting knowledge of the course of legislation in different countries, more particularly in the several parts of Her Majesty's dominions and in the United States." In the course of his remarks at this meeting Mr. Ilbert is reported to have said that there were at present sixty legislatures at work in the different parts of the British dominions and that an accurate knowledge of their proceedings would do a great deal towards checking hasty and imperfect generalizations.

Important as the result of this meeting undoubtedly is in affording a convenient assistance both to the students and the makers of law in all English-speaking countries, the application of the main principle involved is a matter of far greater value and significance in the conduct of colonization in the truer and wider sense including the direction of the vanguard of advancing civilization; for colonization deals not only with the advertising of the natural resources of new countries, but with large movements of population, the peculiarities of different races and classes of men, and the many sides of human nature. The principles of colonization, therefore, are no less wide and far-reaching than the principles of law, and they can only be ascertained from the observance of phenomena throughout the whole length of the line in the countries to which immigration is directed. But unlike the science of law, the fundamental principles of colonization are as yet imperfectly understood, for the treatment of the subject has hitherto been desultory and confined to limited fields. Thinking men have not had access to concurrent reports and expressions of thought in other countries, and consequently the study has been neglected from lack of sufficient material, upon which accurate generalizations could be formed.

There are few subjects more important from a national point of view. On the one hand, Great Britain is vitally concerned in the wise disposition of her surplus population and the relief of overcrowding in the cities. She is bidding farewell to thousands of her citizens, who, each year, by stress of competition, are forced to leave her shores, and, as the centre of the Empire, she is interested in keeping them, if possible, from straying outside the British dominions. On the other hand, each of the British colonies, to meet the expected demands of a rapidly increasing population, have burdened themselves with taxation for the erection of great public works. Their chief wealth consists in undeveloped resources, which are valueless without the magic touch of capital and labour, for which they depend upon colonization to supply; while in the conduct of colonization they annually expend vast sums of money with most disproportionate results.

There are few subjects of greater interest from a human point of view. To the young man, full of energy and hope, to the drudge in the city office, to the farm labourer with his apparent hopeless prospects in Europe, colonization offers great attractions. The contrast to the life under older civilizations, and the many difficulties to be overcome, all have a peculiar and irresistible interest of their own, both for the settler and the spectator, an interest which has lately become more general by the growth of the spirit of emigration, for there is now scarcely a hearth or a home in Great Britain,

where some member of the family, a relative or friend, is not making his living in a foreign country.

And yet, with all this, as we have said, there is no subject of public interest at the present day of which the scientific study has in the past been more generally neglected.

The difficulty lies in the lack of system. The official returns that lie on the minister's tables do not appear to reach, or at any rate to be understood by the people. The solutions of the problems suggested by these returns can only be arrived at by wide experience among the settlers themselves. There is no machinery to educate and collect the thoughts and observations of experienced settlers or to define the lines upon which information is sought, and there is no provision made for recording for future use the product of thought or the lessons of the past. Now and again, in the ephemeral literature of the day, we see valuable thoughts and suggestions. Rising like bubbles to the surface, they attract attention for a moment and then fall back without sign into the unfathomed sea of experience from which they come.

It may, perhaps, interest the reader, who has not given thought to the subject, briefly to mention a few of the more important questions which may be considered under the head of colonization. They may be divided into three heads: the movements of population, missionary work, and the direction of settlers.

Under the first head we may place the tendencies of emigration from different European countries, the difference between the gross and net immigration to each colony, the relation between the urban and rural populations and the reasons for the movement of population to the cities. These questions are at present more or less fully dealt with in the official reports of the different colonies. Under the head of missionary work we may consider a comparison of the cost of immigration, the effect and extent of misrepresentation, the best means of commanding the confidence of intending settlers, the power of social attraction between colonists and their friends in the Old Country, the influence of this element in affording pecuniary assistance to emigrants, the best means of stimulating this influence and the opportunities for imparting information through the schools. Under the head of the direction of settlers we may mention the assistance of the unemployed in migration from the cities in the colonies to the farm, the peculiar difficulties or adaptability of different nationalities and different classes of men, the effect of previous training, juvenile immigration, the success of philanthropic emigration, assisted immigration, the formation of government colonies as opposed to haphazard settlement, hamlet settlement, the best means of imparting instruction and advice to settlers, the effect of the sale of government lands to speculators, the formation of co-operative associations, the utility of irrigation and legislation affecting the control of irrigation. We might continue the list almost *ad infinitum*, but enough has been said to show the importance of the subject, the imperfect knowledge that we possess, and the necessity of some system of comparative record.

Just at the present time the consideration of this question has for us in Canada a peculiar and, indeed, overwhelming importance, for the rapid growth of the country in the near future greatly depends on the wise conduct of our colonization during the next few years.

Just as in the Southern States, where King Cotton reigned supreme, the fall of that monarch was followed by a period of gloom and depression, until, under the direction of an intelligent government, there suddenly sprang up a more healthy and prosperous civilization of diversified products, so, now, in our North-West, with the fall of the price of wheat, we are in a critical stage of transition, and the gospel of mixed farming and self-maintenance is driving out a civilization founded upon one product, and dependent upon a foreign market. The wave of immigration during the past ten years from several causes has passed in thousands through our country to the Western States, but already it is whispered that Canada offers better advantages for the immigrant. We have then a double task immediately before us, to blazon this report to the world, and to speed the return to prosperity, taking care that the new era of civilization is founded not upon the fancies of inexperienced settlers, but on the soundest and wisest principles. The opportunity calls for a supreme effort, and, in our actions, we shall need all the help that wisdom and experience can supply.

The importance of a right understanding of compara-