

Assembly. Their religious interests have not been neglected, and their children have not been allowed to suffer for want of facilities for education. In some cases by private efforts, and in others by the Government, school-buildings have been erected and schools opened for their special benefit. On the Aldgate Blocks four churches and three schools have been built since the land was settled upon by the blockers."

Now for what I saw myself. My first visit to a "block" was paid on the day I reached Adelaide. I had not far to go. A drive of three miles took us to the Goodwood Block of 80 acres divided into sixteen 5-acre lots. I can best describe them by saying that the better sort of them looked like very home-like and substantial cottages, standing in large vegetable-gardens and young orchards. The chocolate-coloured ground was said to be rich, but dry, and in that hot arid climate irrigation was of course a prime necessity. This was managed by windmill-pumps, the water from which was poured into deep circular concrete tanks, and looked clear, cool, and inviting there. We walked about some of the gardens and orchards. The fruit trees were young peaches, apples, loquats, almonds, apricots, oranges, and lemons. The vegetables were the same as ours. One of the settlers with whom I talked told me his trade,—he was an artisan,—and explained how in the dull times when he was on half-time he fell back on working in his block. I asked him how he managed to find time to look after his garden when trade was brisk. He explained that work was then done on half-holidays and in the evenings, and that his father who lived with him also lent a helping hand. I gathered also that the neighbours on the blocks, when on friendly terms, helped each other at intervals. Of course the appearance of the lots varied, no doubt according to the skill and characters of the occupants. I heard that some of them were mortgaged, a result that was doubtless due to the right of purchase foolishly given by the Act under which the Goodwood Blocks had been leased. By a recent amending Act, however, this right has been taken away in the case of all blocks to be leased within twelve miles of Adelaide.

I need not say how interested I was in these Adelaide suburban blocks. They are just the "artisans' allotments" which many people are so anxious for in New Zealand, and which, so far, our Government has not been able to get. The impression made on my mind by what I saw, both at Goodwood and at another block in the suburbs of Adelaide, was highly favourable; and I think it should encourage us in making similar experiments here. Such homes would be a boon, indeed, to industrious artisans in slack times. Of course, the initial cost of such blocks must be a restriction. The land at Goodwood was priced at £60 an acre; the price of a 5-acre block would therefore be £300; but the rent fixed is but £7 10s. a year—rather too low, I think, for us to venture on. The maximum amount which may be advanced per settler is £50, repayable in nine years; the interest is 5 per cent.

A South Australian block of a different kind is that at Aldgate, among the hills, about sixteen miles from Adelaide by road and twenty-three miles by train. Here about three hundred blockers were placed, representing about a thousand human beings. Their orchards and fields lie among the thinly-spread bush on the slopes of the hills; down below are their vegetable-gardens, in the troughs of the narrow winding valleys. Except in these bottoms the soil seemed poor enough; but the rainfall was said to be abundant, and I could feel that the climate was much cooler than on the Adelaide plains. Many of the cottages were pictures of comfort. Some, built of stone, looked more like the smaller sort of suburban villas than settlers' huts. The land is by nature sparsely covered with stringy-bark and other timber: that enables some of the settlers to turn a useful penny by selling firewood. They are also near enough to Adelaide to sell flowers and vegetables in town.

One lot was pointed out to me where lived the family of a selector who had died almost directly after taking up his lot. His sons, mere lads of thirteen and fourteen, had buckled to the work, and had kept their mother and sisters, had complied with the requirements of the Act in the way of improvements, with the result that I saw a comfortable home. Another block was that of a shearer who kept his parents there while spending some months of the year in the far interior and in other colonies. One of the best-looking lots had for an owner a man who had come to the block with just £1 10s. in his pocket. The fruit in the Aldgate orchards was only what we can grow nearly everywhere in New Zealand, as the climate was not so suitable for oranges and semi-tropical fruit as the low-lying plain. Some of the settlers had horses, many more cows, pigs, and poultry. The rent put on the land varied from 6d. to 1s. per acre, the size of the allotments from 15 to 20 acres. In driving about I saw nothing to make me think that the rosy accounts of the settlement given me by Mr. Wilson, the Inspector (an old Coromandel man), who kindly acted as our guide, were in any way misleading. Indeed, unless I am much mistaken, the block is a genuine success, and shows that, under certain circumstances, village settlers, if they use their wits, can make headway even on poor hill clay.

The most interesting and novel part of my journey, however, was a visit which the hospitable kindness of the South Australian Ministry enabled me to pay to their young co-operative settlements on the banks of the River Murray. These lie a long way from town. We went by train for six hours to Morgan, at the north-western bend where the Murray turns southward towards the sea. There we went on board a river-steamer, and spent the next sixty-five hours going up and down the river. It was then in high flood, and a very strange sight, as the eucalypt forest on the banks was half-submerged, often as far as the eye could see. The settlements are twelve in number, but I could only visit six, though I was lucky enough to meet the chairman of another, with whom I had a long talk. The westernmost of them is but five miles from Morgan, the easternmost 157. The number of human beings now in them is almost two thousand, and continues to increase. Each body of settlers form their own association, elect their own trustees, and, subject to the Act and a certain overriding power on the part of the Government, manage their own affairs. I have before me now the memorandum of association and the rules of more than one of their village associations. The chairman and trustees direct the work, but are, of course, themselves co-operators, not only elected by their fellow-settlers and living among them, but removable at any time should two-