

It is evident that, along with a sincere desire on a man's part to be sociable with his fellow-men, and pure and thoughtful towards women, there should be found an answering goodwill, trust, and freedom in friendship with him on the part of the men and women he knows; freedom in word and deed, an atmosphere above the petty differences of sex, creed, class, or condition.

Those who can be friends in this way will find that each feeds and develops the others' natures, and the more so, the more the fusion and interchange.

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Book Notices.

Report on The Settlement of the people on the Land in the Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, etc. By J. E. March.

"Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth."—*Walt. Whitman.*

The Labour question is confessedly one of the great problems of the age, affecting, as it does, not simply individuals, but the physical, mental, and moral status of nations. An unemployed person does not only represent a certain amount of unutilized labour. We have to admit the fact that, generally speaking, he is a menace to himself and society at large. Evil breeds more readily in empty chambers. It is therefore clearly one of the first duties of the Government, as the guardian of the people's welfare, to see that no one person leads an idle life. And the immense superiority of soil-tilling compared with other occupations, for either the under-worked or the over-worked, is generally admitted. The problem is how to bring land and labour together. This problem is now being faced in our own colony, as the Report before us testifies.

Early in the present year, Mr March, acting under Governmental instructions, visited Australia, and inspected the various village settlements, labour colonies, etc. His report is a record of facts, with "an occasional expression of individual opinion thereon."

The mother colony, New South Wales, by no means takes the lead in settling the people on the land. A Land for Settlements Act is not yet on the Statute Book of the colony. In 1893 an Act was passed to establish and regulate labour settlements on Crown lands, providing for the appointment of Boards of Control, to whom the Crown may lease lands for labour settlements, the said Boards paying a nominal rent of, say, 6d per acre per annum.

The settlers are allowed to nominate four members of the Board. They also receive an advance of from £30 to £50, according to the number in family, such sum to be repaid by yearly instalments, beginning at the expiration of the first four years. So far only three settlements have been established. The partial failure of these three is owing to the fact that the lands selected were of inferior quality, and not sufficiently extensive for the number of settlers placed thereon. Individual rather than co-operative settlement is found the more likely to succeed, unless the settlers are known to each other, and can agree to work together. Mr March evidently considers matters in New South Wales in a very unsatisfactory condition. He says:—"On the one hand I saw a large army of able-bodied men employed on comparatively unprofitable employment—653 men at work levelling sand for two days, and only accomplishing as much as could be done by a pair of horses and a scoop in one day—with a larger army at the Labour Bureau seeking work, and on the other a few sheep trotting over excellent land which would support in comfort hundreds of families." Work for a considerable number has been found on the old goldfields, some six hundred families having been sent to join the husbands and fathers. That "fossicking" is profitable we are assured from the fact that the increase of gold in one year was of the value of £263,086.

In Victoria, in 1893, the large number of unemployed led to the passing of an Act providing for the establishment of village communities, home-stead associations, and labour colonies. No fewer than seventy-two village settlements have been formed, representing a population of nearly 7000 persons; and where the soil is good and the locality suitable they have been a marked success. The settlers are happy, healthy, and comfortable, and few indeed would on any consideration go back to a town life. The allotments vary from three to twenty acres. Permissive occupancy only is given for the first three years at a nominal rental—6d per acre. An advance of £40 is granted to each settler to aid in house-building, fencing, &c. At the end of twenty years the freehold may be obtained, provided all amounts due to the Crown have been paid. At Koo-wee-rup village settlement and a great Government work (drainage of the Koo-wee-rup swamp) are carried on simultaneously. Areas of 20-acre lots have been surveyed on either side of the drain, and the men are employed for a fortnight on the drainage works, and a fortnight on their allotments. The swamp contains some 52,900 acres, and it is hoped that, by the time the works are finished, the men will have established themselves. Each settler has a permit to occupy