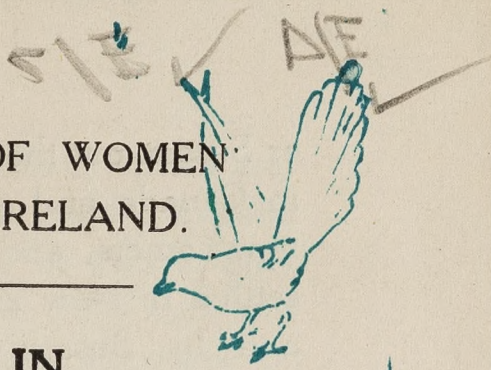


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**AN EXPERIMENT IN  
COUNTY ORGANISATION FOR  
EMIGRATION.**

BY THE REV. R. L. GWYNNE  
*Kent Colonising Association.*

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The two root troubles of our country to-day are over-population and the decline in vitality, due to the overcrowding of the towns and the gradual desertion of the country.

These things are not the wail of the pessimist but are stern facts caused by our rather artificial life, and every war brings them more into the light. War means waste, but in peace we waste human life too. To-day at any Labour Exchange boys and girls may be seen coming up for doles—workless, listless and almost certain to depreciate into waste products. The same thing happened after the South African War: there was no future for strong young lads—nothing but casual jobs—and glaring inequalities between rich and poor were painfully in evidence. These things sent me out to visit the Dominions, in order that I might see what chances there were in them for the unwanted boys and girls of our great towns.

But the English are hard to move, and the next necessary step was to make the movement as easy as possible; so we tried to create a county patriotism which would bridge over the sea and take root in the new Dominions, Kent and Sussex boys forming another Kent

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or Sussex out there. Now there are Kentish associations in Canada and Australia. These prepare the way for new comers, and we are often asked by Kent farmers, settled in New Zealand and elsewhere, for Kent boys, and by Sussex men settled in the back blocks of Australia for Sussex boys.

The first thing is to reach the minds of the people here, to teach them to understand the necessity of emigration; to save our own homeland, for overpopulation without ordered movement means starvation and ultimately gradual submersion; and to preserve our Dominions, for if we do not help to populate them other nations most certainly will. Also let us show them that emigration does not mean the sending out of one class by another: to succeed, it must be the going forth of *all* classes—professional, industrial, agricultural and the leisured, many of whom would often be far happier and better making a new home Overseas than growing always more parochially minded in a London flat. These last should be encouraged to go from the deepest motives of service to God and to others. The emigration of all classes to New Zealand has made it one of the most cultured and attractive of the Dominions. Clergy should serve for two or three years Overseas before taking up work here; Empire interchange of teachers should be increasingly practiced; headmasters should hold a certificate of travel. We must be more alert too about propaganda: in every railway station, in every class room, in our great public schools, in free and in University libraries, there should be beautiful pictures of our great Dominions—their chief towns, main buildings, harbours, farms, sheep, cattle and forests, and portraits of their great statesmen.

But to turn to our little experiment. Are we reaching the minds of the people? For twenty years we have been running our voluntary agency in Kent; there is

one too in Sussex, and branches in Wiltshire, Surrey and Essex, all worked by voluntary helpers and by experts who know the Dominions. We touch, of course, only a tiny proportion, but we have enabled 1,000 lads and some 400 families to take up work successfully overseas. Our Canadian Secretary makes periodical visits to that country, our chief adviser has a large farm in New Zealand, and by his help we have placed men, women and lads there. I, as Chairman, have visited all the Dominions, and have seen in them the foundation of little Kents. Our experience has taught us that county patriotism is worth cultivating. For a thousand years this love for our own little bit of Britain has been growing: let us use it as the base for the transference of British character to far off British States. We try to send each boy to a friend, for the grasp of a good woman's hand, the kindly word of experience, have done much to soften the terrible uprooting of home affections. We find always that our own colonists are our best helpers in settling others.

We want to enlarge our scope, to get a committee formed in every county "to advise and direct persons of all classes seeking work in the other States of Britain." The County Councils should be asked to help, and later, as was done at the formation of the Territorial Forces, Lords Lieutenants, and Chairmen of the County Councils might be summoned by Royal command to consider a regular scheme of emigration by counties. We have spent a hundred million pounds in doles; these create thousands of wasters. Would it not be a better way to give to men and women the means of livelihood well-directed emigration affords, its life so much more progressive, its vision of hope, an ideal home for which to work? We have to disarm the bitter criticism of little Englanders and this can best be done by better nomenclature; by discarding the Shipping Companies'

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methods of advertisement, which are frequently misleading; by giving plain, good expert advice to all anxious to know; and by insisting on every class being represented and going ourselves, if necessary, as pioneers and guides.

Lastly, how can women workers help this scheme of enlightenment, of enlargement of vision, and of movement for relieving the horrible conditions under which thousands are leading here a drab life?

They can read and think over the problem and seek to justify to themselves and the country this drastic and historical remedy. It requires the sympathy and kindness of a true woman, as much as the business methods of the man. Women must approach the subject from the woman's point of view, and thus open to men their real objection to it and their cure.

In schools and families women's influence transcends every other. Their education is a loosening of the bonds of the mind. Surely England wants release from her insularity of thought?

Women can draw their Overseas sisters into this work in each county, for there are, in all parts of England, hundreds who have lived in, or visited the Dominions, who would gladly help the enquirer by counsel. As guides, as protectors during voyages, as letter writers, as agents for the colonists here, there is a deep need for women's help in this—the greatest political necessity of to-day—the movement towards the various Oversea States, and the reduction of our overwhelming population here.

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*To be obtained from the General Secretary, National Council of Women, Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W.1. Price 1d. each, 4d. a dozen, or 2/- a hundred, post free. Price 1d. each, 2/- for 50, or 3/6 for 100, post free.*  
March, 1923.