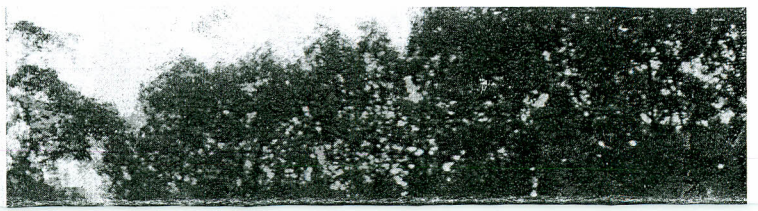
OUR DISTANT EMPIRE.

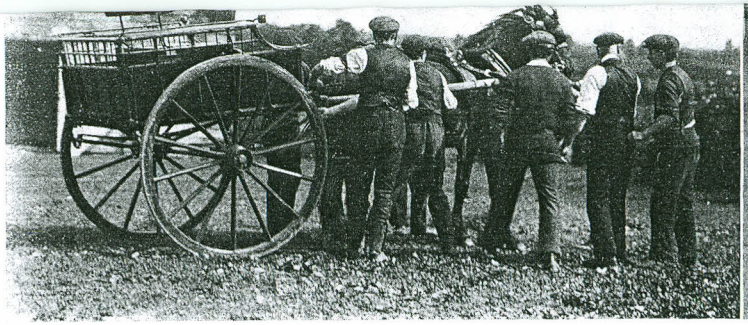
TRAINING EMIGRANTS FOR QUEENSLAND.

COMPARATIVELY few people are aware of the great pains taken by the Church Army to train boys for Australia. The farm at which the work is carried on is at Hempstead Hall in Essex. But there is a process of elimination before that stage is reached. The object is to put the boys through such a course of training as will get rid of the inefficient or unsuitable and leave only those who will be desirable immigrants for Australia. The system has been in existence since 1910, and now works very well indeed. The class of boy to be dealt with is either that which gets out of employment altogether or drifts into what are called blind alleys; that is to say, they have been errand or odd boys of one kind and another who earned a moderately good wage for their years till they grew up to be sixteen or seventeen, and then found their advance blocked. Obviously, however, it would be no good turn to the Colonies to net all the boys who are in this position and send them out indiscriminately. The first problem, then, is that of selection. It is accomplished in this way. Great care is primarily exercised in choosing applicants, and after they have been selected they are first sent to the establishment of the Church Army at Willesden. Here they are subjected to training and discipline. They are put through exercises and taught gardening, carpentry, bootmaking and repairing, and kindred crafts. All the while they are under observation, so that the authorities at the end of a probationary period are able to see which of them are suitable for the Colonial farm at Hempstead. The age at which they go there is from sixteen to twenty-one years of age and their training is not for any shorter period than three months. Perhaps that errs, if at all, on the side of being too brief a preparation. It is certain that in thirteen weeks an accomplished all-round farm servant cannot be made. The time is long enough, however, to introduce them to the various tasks which they will have to perform. For instance, they begin by receiving a certain amount of elementary instruction in regard to milking and taking care of cows, but as soon as they show themselves proficient they have to take entire charge of a cow for two or three days. It is impracticable to give a longer spell, because during the short preparatory session they have a great many subjects to deal with. Very great attention, for example, has to be paid to horses.

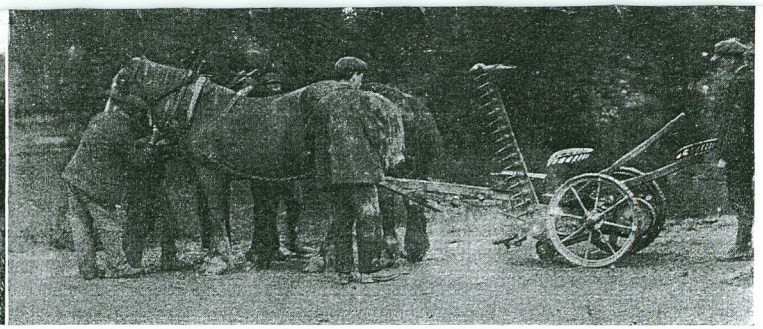
LEARNING TO RIDE WITHOUT STIRRUPS.

On the great Queensland farms it is absolutely necessary that the colonist should be able to ride, drive and harness horses. Here there is a wide field for them, and several of our photographs show the boys in the act of being taught the management of horses. One, it will be noticed, is being taught to ride without stirrups, others are learning how to harness the horse to a farm waggon.



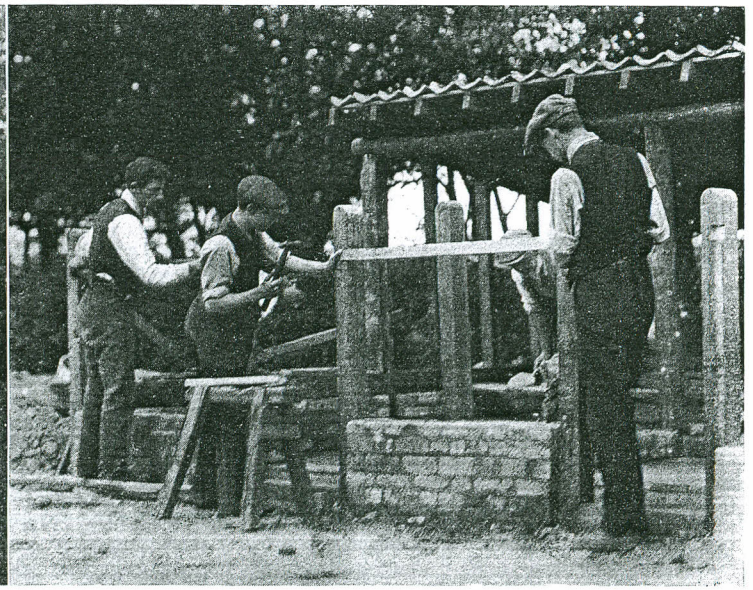


HARNESSING THE COLT.



GETTING READY THE CUTTER.

FENCING.



BUILDING OUTHOUSES.

EXPLAINING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PLOUGH.

THE PLOUGH AT WORK.

It should be added that the making and repairing of agricultural implements and tools is a very important part of their training. They have also to know something about the work of the blacksmith's shop, as the colonist, to succeed, must above all else be a handy man. The more things he can turn to, the more he will be valued. Ploughing and hedging, reaping and harvesting, stacking and threshing he may not be adept at, but in a few months he can have been introduced to them, and in that case the practical education is continued and completed in the Colonies. The importance of poultry is very well understood. For long the keeping of chickens and the production of eggs were arts whether he has or has not the material out of which an efficient colonist may be made. If he has the right stuff in him, the practical knowledge can be picked up subsequently. But in practice it is found that while the majority of boys are very fond of an outdoor life and take to farm work as willingly as a duck takes to water, there are others to whom it is distasteful. The latter are carefully weeded out. Needless to say, they are not abandoned in any way; but steps are taken to provide them with tasks more suitable to their disposition. Another advantage of the system is that the three months of probation provide a searching test of character. The boys are well aware that success or failure depends upon their own

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during the winter nights to play billiards, draughts and other games, and a good and entertaining library has been provided. It will thus be seen that new and very wholesome influences are brought to bear on those who would otherwise drift into the ranks of the loafer and the unemployable. There is no surer way of curing bad habits and forming good than by keeping the lads at brisk and active work during proper hours and encouraging them to play their games energetically and vivaciously when they have the leisure. After their time of training and trial is over they are not lost sight of. The expense of sending them out to Queensland on nominated passages is met for the greater part by the Church Army; but each emigrant has to contribute the sum of two pounds towards the expense himself. This is most usually found by the friends or guardians of the boys, though it sometimes happens that the youth is himself able to produce the requisite funds. On going over to Queensland he is met at the port of landing by a Colonial agent of the Church Army. Neither the Government nor anyone else guarantees a situation; but as the demand for boys is extremely keen, no difficulty whatever is found in placing them. Thus the youth is started on a career that has every promise of being one of profit to himself and usefulness to others. The system has been in operation only a short time, but as far as they have gone, the results have been entirely satisfactory. It would not be reasonable to expect that every young man so started should prove a success, but the failures have been most astonishingly small, and the great numbers of letters received from Australia go to show that the system invented and carried out by the Church Army results in discovering exactly what is the best kind of lad to make a colonist of and in giving him as good a preparation as is possible.

FARMING IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA.

FARMING in British East Africa is making favourable progress and opening a wide field for the man who, possessing some capital of his own, is anxious to invest it in something that will give him a fair return, besides giving him a good prospect of future increase. To the healthy young man of enterprise and capability the life presents a good opening. A very large sum is not necessary to start with, and for one who is prepared to live a simple life at first, the Colony offers a fair chance of success, and many men are turning their steps thither and finding it a far freer and more interesting life than they were ever led to expect. The Government has during the last ten years been opening up by degrees large districts, which are very rapidly developing into profitable farms. [illegible] and as all the best farming districts are at the altitudes of from four thousand to seven thousand feet, the fact of living in an equatorial country need not be a drawback, provided due precautions as to clothing and sun-hats are taken. Native labour is employed and is fairly cheap, but, like elsewhere, a trifle uncertain; but white men are breaking up the ground with a plough, which is pulled by oxen, and when the ground is stony mishaps may occur. The writer witnessed the breaking up of many acres of virgin soil and old native shambas (plantations) by means of natives using the jembis (or native hoes), and perhaps this means is the more efficacious at first, as the ground is more thoroughly cleaned and can be more easily ploughed later.

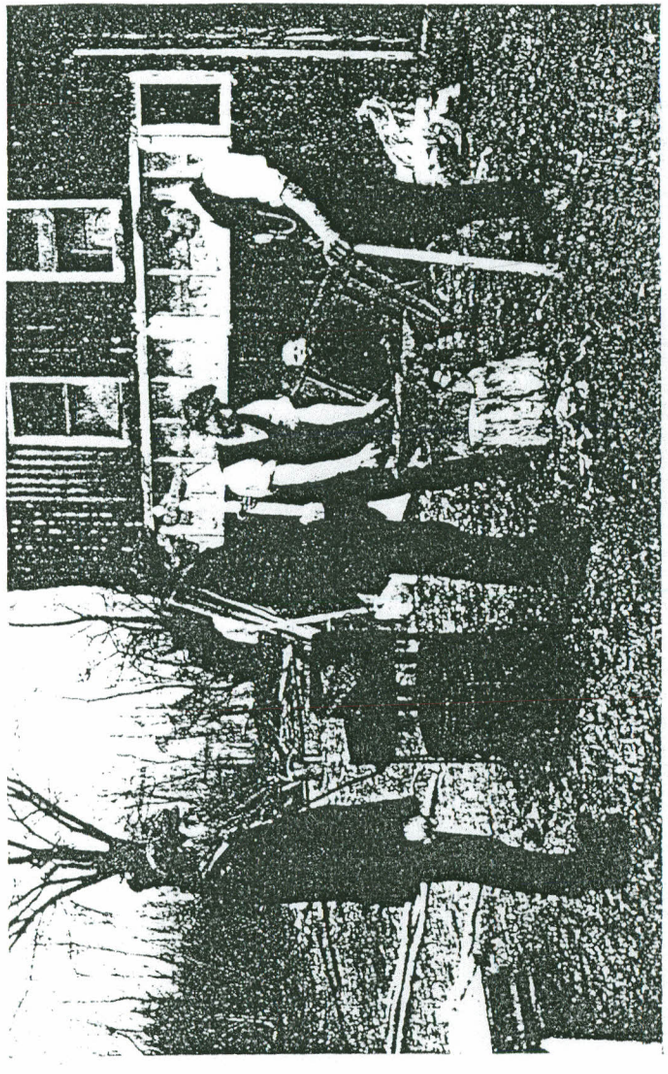
Coffee-planting was in process on the farm, and the young plants had been raised in nursery beds near the river during the dry season with great success, and were transplanted to the shamba when the rains began, and developed rapidly into strong, healthy plants. The soil in this district is splendid and should make a rival to that near Nairobi, which has proved so valuable to the coffee planter during the recent four years. Coffee plants begin to bear about the end of two years, so there is not such a lengthy wait for results, and it can be fairly expected that coffee-growing will flourish largely during the coming years in this equatorial country. This district is a well-watered one, and thus irrigation in the dry season is an easier matter than in some places where water is scarce. Mealies were grown very successfully on this land. Cattle were doing well, as there was sufficient grass during the dry season, and it abounds, of course, in the rainy one—but a country that can keep grass all the year round is bound to be a good one for cattle. The milk from the native cows is small in quantity but very rich, and butter-making was carried on successfully. It must be done in the early morning hours, and the writer found very little difference to the work of making it in England during the summer months, as the fall of temperature during the night is great, and the butter is firm and workable and of a good quality. The neighbouring district of Lumbwa has a good working dairy, and excellent butter is made near Nairobi. Stock-breeding and dairy-farming are proving profitable. The price of native cattle has risen considerably during the last few years. Goats and sheep should be kept as well. At these higher altitudes tsetse-fly and rinderpest are not prevalent, as on the plains, but the precautions taken by the Government to prevent the spread of disease are strictly enforced by the stock inspectors in their districts, and this has improved the outlook very much, on the whole. The ponies taken up improved much in this district, and fattened considerably on the good feed. Leopards infest this district, but strong bomas are erected and the cattle placed in them at night, and during the day, too, they are always in charge of the native herdman and dogs; a good supply

Gishu" plateau has sprung into a flourishing centre during the last five years, and the Londiani allotment, which is a healthy and beautiful part of the Naudi country, was opened up during the last twelve months, and the writer lately spent several months on a farm in this district, where the progress of developing land in a new country was demonstrated in a very interesting fashion. The district in question is nearer the railway than the "Uasin Gishu" by some fifty or sixty miles, and it runs through part of the land. The Government are making a new road from the railway, through this country, to the "Uasin Gishu," which will benefit greatly the dwellers in the district, as a means of transport is the greatest benefit any Government can bestow upon settlers, as the difficulties of getting supplies and transmitting produce are very great in a new country. The farms are large, the one the writer stayed on being as much as five thousand acres, and it was considered one of the best in the district, for it presented a fine field for cultivation in the flatter parts, while the hills were covered with rich grass suitable for grazing, and promised well for stock-farming and cattle-breeding.

The pioneer, as a rule, first builds grass huts for himself and the native servants—and these are the best protection from the sun—until the tin or stone house can be erected, as a well-built grass hut is wonderfully cool, and the difference in temperature inside to the glaring heat outside is something to marvel at. Tents are very hot, though wonderfully comfortable on Safari. On many East African farms the grass house or cottage is the only one built so far, and is often on quite a large scale, running to several rooms; but if funds will allow, a small tin house, lined with wood, should be erected as soon as possible, as during the rains, which begin in March or April and are very heavy, the advantage of possessing one is undeniable, especially to the young Englishman lately arrived. His compeer, the South African settler, has been trained to Colonial life from early age, and can do many things that one trained in a different mode of life may not risk at first with impunity. During the night the temperature falls very considerably, of the latter is of immense value to the farmer, and should be of a large, smooth-coated breed, on account of the grass ticks. Chickens can be kept, but the depredations of hawks are trying when the grass is short; when it is long it protects them from these birds, who are always more prevalent during the dry time. Native settlers were encouraged to come and live on this farm, as it is a help in developing to have a few families; but they must make an agreement to protect the owner's interests. They build huts and are allowed land, which they break up and cultivate, growing grain for their own food supplies, and thus assisting in bringing the large acreage into cultivation; but they must be settled at a reasonable distance from the owner's dwellings. The sons of the families were employed as cattle-herds, and soon the best began to show ability in the planting-out of coffee trees. These are under quite different agreements to the ordinary gang of native porters, or workers, engaged on the farm, under a headman, as these are often imported from other districts. Stores must be laid in at the start, for a good supply is necessary. The vegetable garden must also be laid out as soon as possible. These grow very well; potatoes, tomatoes and lettuces are ready after a few weeks, and are of splendid quality and size. Beans, peas and onions and other kinds of things are all easy to grow, and these add greatly to the value of the commissariat, for plenty of good plain food is necessary to keep in good health. At first, the larder depends solely on the gun for meat, and the buck and antelope, guinea-fowl and partridges are all excellent eating. Later on, when fencing is up, sheep can be kept for eating, as well as goats. The white men living in the high altitudes present a very healthy appearance invariably; the fine air and outdoor life are the best inducements to keeping in a fit condition, and this is no country for a loafer. A young man coming out would be well advised to go as a boarder to a farm for a few months, to learn "the ropes," preliminary to starting one for himself, if he has not previously lived in any Colony, and some knowledge of the native language could also be acquired in that time. Often a man with too little capital can get a post of white helper on a farm, if he has some knowledge of the working details.

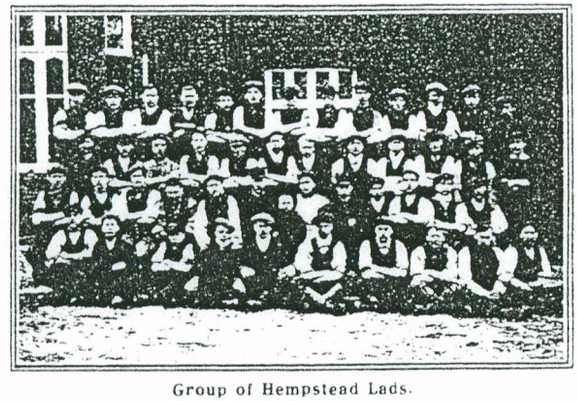
H. A. C. P.

Training at Hempstead Hall

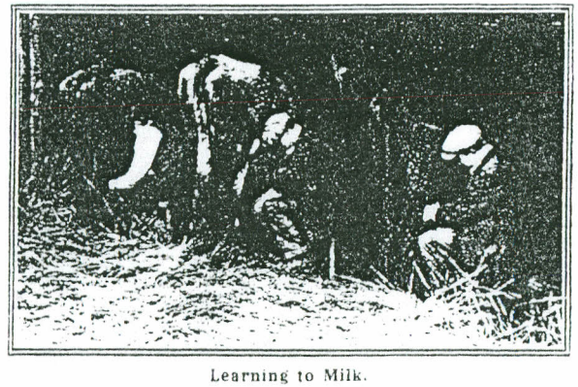


Lads learning Smith's Work, Hempstead Hall, Essex.

or four months' special training for farm life preparatory to going to Australia, to the care of a local Committee with the Archbishop of Brisbane at its head, which

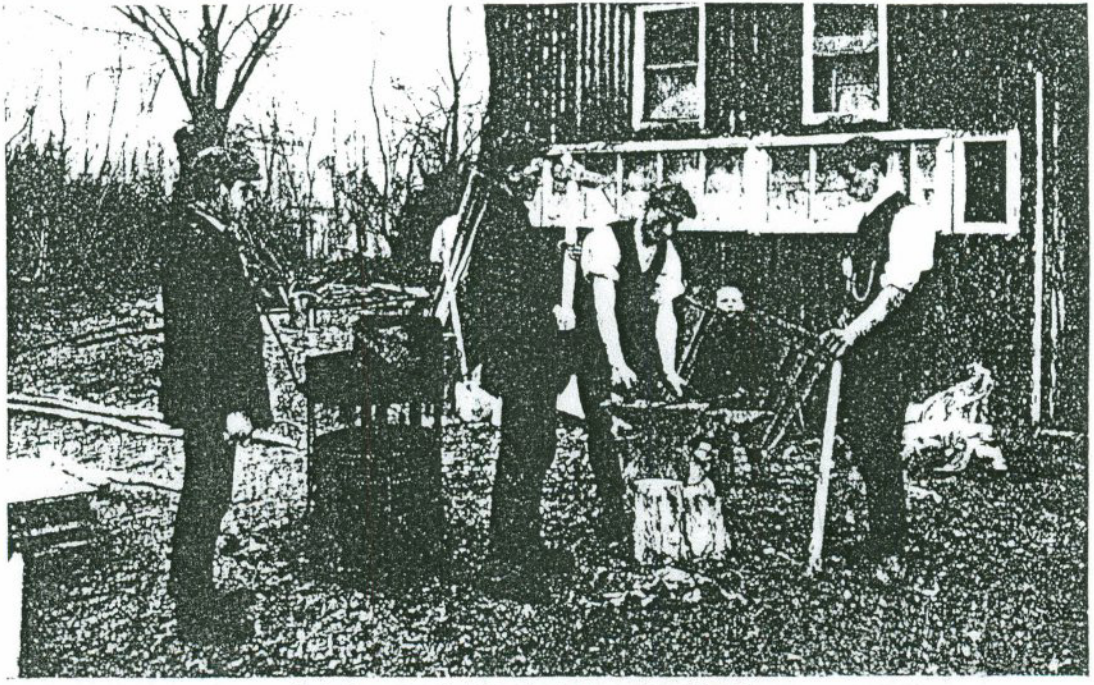


Group of Hempstead Lads.



Learning to Milk.

secures for them well-paid and permanent work on farms, and looks after their material and spiritual welfare. The training which they receive at Hempstead, though



Lads Learning Smith's Work, Hempstead Hall, Essex.

Framing at Hempstead Hall