

A week or two ago we published an article from the *San Francisco Alta* giving a brief sketch of the Immigration scheme of our townsman Mr. Mercer. As everything having a bearing on this subject is of general interest, we copy the following from the *Boston Advertiser* concerning the excess of females in Massachusetts and the efforts now working to convert the burthen of the East into a blessing for the West:

Governor Andrew called the attention of the Legislature, at the opening of the session, to the inequality of the numbers of the sexes in Massachusetts. He presented at the same time some very important suggestions as to the derangement which necessarily follows this disproportion, in all efforts for the proper employment of women, or for giving them fair fields of work or fair wages. His views, which were presented in the most careful way, and evidently from a very broad study of the subject, at once attracted wide attention. And in fact, as it is certain that with the return of peace the emigration of men will be greatly stimulated, and the disproportion of which we speak increased, the thoughts of the public are not called to this subject any too soon.

Governor Andrew and the directors of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, who have from their different points of view approached this subject and ventured to suggest its difficulties, claim that women in Massachusetts have not heretofore had their fair rights in the way of emigration. Emigration to the place a man chooses is an essential privilege of a man's life in America, and the figures show how largely Massachusetts men avail themselves of it. This right, however, is one which women do not, in fair proportion, enjoy, and it is quite time that they should, and that some honorable

system of organized emigration should give the opportunity to women to emigrate, when for any reason they wish to do so.

It cannot be pretended that women have the opportunity now in the same freedom with men. One may say that if California and Oregon need women, women will go there unassisted and unprotected; but any shipmaster or shipowner knows that the steerage passage of a passenger ship—wholly fit for a man's passage though it may be,—is wholly unfit for a woman, however she may be protected. Any man who has sisters would rather die than see one of them go alone on such a passage, where he might gladly go himself. At this moment, therefore, while a man can go to Oregon for two hundred and twenty-five dollars, a woman cannot go for less than four hundred and fifty, unless there be such an organization of the emigration of families as the Emigrant Aid Company is at work upon, and as the State may very properly assist in, enabling women to go with comfort and with honor as cheaply as men. Most of the Oregon emigration goes across the plains. That movement, perfectly simple to young men, is almost impossible for women, unless some one shall have organized the parties in which they shall go.

That the emigration of women for every variety of work which women do here, in the dairy, in the school-room and in all other forms of industry, is fairly begged for by the distant States, is well known. Why do not the women go then? It is because, until the Governor's earnest suggestion in

his message, public attention had not been aroused to the necessity of seconding the efforts made here for giving system and character to the emigration. That there are no women here who wish to go, or that the wages of women here are sufficient for their honorable support, we suppose nobody pretends.

We happen to know that twenty-four young women graduated at one of the commercial schools last autumn, with credentials that they were fitted to serve as book-keepers. Twenty-one of these young women are still without employment,—some of them having been five months seeking it. The moment it was announced that women could be occupied in teaching negroes at the South, thousands of applications were made to the committees who had that matter in charge. And every member of the Boston School Committee knows that the duty of deciding which young lady, out of a hundred applicants, shall receive, as if it were a lion, a vacant position as teacher in the schools, is a constantly recurring and most painful duty. Such instances are enough to show that there is not a sufficient opening for the women who have to earn their own support.

"Let them become servants in families then," says some one, indignant because his coffee was badly burned this morning. We



venture to reply that that department of labor, wholly honorable as it may be, does not provide so large a relief as to be perceptible even in this difficulty. A very large estimate of the number of servants in the census of 1860 supposes that there were 36,000 of both sexes in Massachusetts then. Granting that many of these were incompetent,—supposing our English friend could persuade his fair countrywomen to take their places,—supposing that it is for domestic service that we have educated the pupils of our grammar schools, high schools and normal schools—still it is evident that after the proposed change has been made, there will be as many women unprovided for as there are now, or that the competition will cut down the rates of wages for such service, which are none too high as things are now.

We will not, however, be drawn aside to discuss any details which rest on the idea that an unnatural disproportion of the sexes can be an advantage to either sex or to the community. —The simple point in the Governor's address is this,—that a reasonable arrangement by which women can emigrate honorably and cheaply, *if they wish to*, is simply an arrangement for giving to women a right which the most captious will not deny them. The talk of "exile," which we have heard from men who are probably ashamed of it by this time, is absurd. There

are as many adventurous women as men. There are as many women as men who prefer other climates to ours. There are in Massachusetts more highly cultivated women than men; and there is every reason why such women should have the privilege, which they have not now, of bettering their position, if they wish to.

We understand that the Emigrant Commissioners of Oregon and Idaho are desirous of bringing to the knowledge of our citizens the opportunities in those States for the honorable employment of women. We have a circular before us which shows that in Oregon female domestics earn a dollar a day in gold, besides their board. In such circumstances we are glad to know that the New England Emigrant Aid Company has already despatched an agent to Portland in Oregon, and, on his report, will be prepared in the spring to facilitate the movement of families or of women who need escort in that direction. The committee of the Legislature ought to have no difficulty in determining how the Commonwealth can assist in these enterprises.