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1910s: Pathway to a Settler Colony

By 1905, debate about the prospects for settling Homes graduates abroad was overtaken by the pressing need to find placements for the young people deemed ready for work. While 1908 sits now as a clear marker of the beginning of the organized emigration scheme to New Zealand, the opening section of this chapter aims to capture the uncertainty about where – if anywhere – the emigration scheme might be realized, especially prior to Graham's tour of the Dominions in 1909. Young people's lives were subject to unapologetic experimentation as individuals and small parties were sent away from the isolation of Kalimpong, to Calcutta, where they saw the ocean for the first time. Chaperoned by Homes staff, they climbed aboard ships, enduring and enjoying lengthy sea journeys with multiple stops before eventually arriving at Port Chalmers, in the far south of New Zealand. There they were handed into what Graham hoped was the protective embrace of colonial families.

As the final stage of Graham's grand scheme for tea planters' children, emigration was both a beginning and an end. Beneath the rhetoric of work, improvement, and the greater imperial good, lay the belief that emigration completed the long process of delivery away from problematic tea families and into productive colonial families. This transition saw the Homes occupy a new place in the emigrants' life narratives. When they left India, the Homes family was to become their origin family, and Kalimpong the place that they should feel a nostalgia for. Other pupils and their in-lieu parents – 'Daddy' Graham, James Purdie, the housemothers and aunties – would be the people they missed, and wrote to, when they felt lonely in their new homes. Graham seldom stated this aim outright but frequently reinforced it. As he wrote after visiting the emigrants in New Zealand in 1909, 'Not one of the boys indicated the slightest desire to return to India, but their eyes moistened as they talked of the Homes and the old friends.'¹

Extending the familial ideals of the scheme across the Pacific Ocean to New Zealand, Graham found a further point of connection to a settler colony whose

immigration policies had long been structured around kinship, family and local connections.² Yet in assessing Graham's claim that colonial resettlement placed the Kalimpong emigrants simultaneously into the greater 'imperial family', it is important to signal changes afoot in the relationships between the constituents of the 'messy agglomeration' that was the British Empire.³ In the year before the first emigrants arrived, New Zealand became a Dominion, following Canada and Australia in taking steps to achieve greater autonomy and to be distinguished from 'conquest' colonies like India. This was also the era that settler colonies began to develop identities distinct from each other, and the racialized management of their populations – both Indigenous and non-white migrants – was a key component of this.⁴ Graham was aware of New Zealand's reputation for progressive race relations and looked for evidence of racial harmony and 'blending' when he visited in 1909. His expectation that the rhetorical 'imperial family' would persist despite evidence of growing colonial nationalisms was signalled by his concerted efforts to develop infrastructures in New Zealand for supporting Kalimpong emigrants in the long term.

This chapter traces the establishment of the scheme to New Zealand, from early enquiries and the tentative departure of several graduates, to Graham's visit in 1909, and the subsequent emigration of larger groups into the fold of an emerging local Kalimpong community. In this section of the book – Chapters 4–6 – I deploy a variety of sources to disrupt both the progressive narrative of the scheme's development in New Zealand, and Graham's belief that the 'colonists' left India and their birth families behind upon emigration. One key distinction of the archives for the 1910s is that there is little, if any, government record of the emigrants' entry, despite their potentially problematic status under the racially restrictive immigration legislation enacted from the late nineteenth century. This, and the fact that the children from the six families did not emigrate until the 1920s, increases my reliance in this chapter upon documentary sources generated by the Homes.

A broad scan of *Homes Magazine* is nonetheless sufficient to demonstrate early uncertainty about the feasibility of the emigration scheme and of New Zealand as a destination. It also brings the emigrants' voices to bear for the first time, as excerpts of their letters were printed in the *Homes Magazine* as a means of promotion and also to cultivate the aspirations of other pupils. Though selective and largely positive in tone, these excerpts do include some candid portrayals of the difficulties of life in New Zealand, challenging the narrative of a smooth transition to the Dominion. Their letters also describe the development of a local 'Kalimpong community' through the maintenance of social contact

with other emigrants. As to continued involvement with their birth families, it is only towards the end of this chapter that I can begin to challenge Graham's assertions about the emigrants' turn away from India, using the men's enlistment documentation for war service.

Tentative forays into the New World

Early editions of the *Homes Magazine* carried numerous articles that theorized the settler colonies' economic, environmental and social suitability as destinations for its graduates (see Chapter 3). This information was used to develop the training programme at the Homes and to extend the discussion of emigration as a solution to the Anglo-Indian problem. Not mentioned in these debates, but of equally pressing concern to the scheme, was the wave of racially restrictive border legislation enacted in the settler colonies and the United States at the turn of the century.⁵ In New Zealand, it was the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act that adhered to this global trend. The absence of any discussion about these restrictions in the *Homes Magazine* was surely due in part to Graham's continued acceptance of planters' children on the proviso that they would go to the colonies. But judging from his later reactions to colonial objections to Anglo-Indian immigration, it seems Graham did not anticipate that the new legislation would apply to Homes graduates who were, in his eyes, European in every way that mattered.

The issue was brought to the fore – though still not mentioned in the *Homes Magazine* – in 1905, when the first boy was sent abroad from Kalimpong. An associate of Graham's in Calcutta, a businessman named D. M. Hamilton, put the young man on a boat to Australia. The difficulty he experienced upon landing prompted an exchange of letters between Hamilton and the manager of the Union Steam Ship Company in Dunedin, Charles Holdsworth. 'It was only after a great deal of difficulty that the authorities would allow him to land', Hamilton wrote, 'because he was a little dark in colour.'⁶ Here, then, was the first clash of Graham's idealized emigration vision with the hardening of settler colonial racial attitudes. Hamilton sought information from Holdsworth about the situation in New Zealand: how the law was being implemented, the extent to which it reflected public opinion, and the likelihood of Homes graduates securing employment. Playing on the burgeoning reputation of New Zealand as 'more enlightened' than Australia, he hoped that Holdsworth and his countrymen would be more willing 'to give any decent lad or young woman a chance.'⁷

Holdsworth's reply was sympathetic, but he was reluctant to encourage the scheme. His advice regarding the law was straightforward; the 1899 Act did not exclude immigrants on the basis of colour and contained 'no bar' to Anglo-Indian emigration.⁸ He enclosed a copy of the legislation with his reply. Regarding social acceptance, however, Holdsworth was decidedly less optimistic. His discussions with 'several people' led him to believe that it would be difficult to secure 'suitable employment' for the boys.⁹ He conceded that there was demand for domestic servants, but argued that a local organization would need to take responsibility for young migrant women. 'Several of the churches take considerable interest in mission work in India,' he added, 'and it is possible that these may be able to do something.'¹⁰ Holdsworth's response raised a question about the very sector of Dunedin society that would become crucial to the working of the scheme. To what extent might the missionary impulse, fostered overseas, find expression at home – by welcoming Anglo-Indian adolescents into New Zealand communities and households?

Almost three years later, in January 1908, came the first news of emigration from the Homes. An article in the *Homes Magazine* entitled 'Beginning Life's Battle' reported the departure of six young men 'to take their places in the world.'¹¹ The two 'fine European lads' destined for New Zealand were described as 'the first emigrants definitely set forth by the Homes', implying that there had been previous unsuccessful or informal departures. Emphasizing the cost and organization required, the article noted that 'favourable terms for their passage' had been secured with a Calcutta shipping company and that 'Miss Ponder of Waitahuna, Dunedin, is kindly arranging for their settlement'. Despite these favourable terms, the article invited 'any friends' with a particular interest in the scheme to meet the cost of the boys' tickets. The same article announced the placement of four boys in India, who 'came to us late and whose educational advantages had been limited'.¹² Hence this article is notable not only for reporting domestic and overseas placements together, but also for articulating the hierarchy of potential destinations in which emigration was reserved for the 'finest' – and the whitest. This was not the last time Graham would refer to his graduates as 'European' despite those who were domiciled (and not mixed race) comprising a tiny minority at the Homes.¹³

While local placement was less complicated and less costly than emigration, it too required the development of an active network to oversee the graduates from apprenticeship through to employment, and to find appropriate accommodation for them. Committees were established across India for this purpose.¹⁴ The four boys in this 1908 article were sent to Sibpur Engineering College in Howrah

(near Calcutta), and 'kindly' promised subsequent employment in the motor workshops of 'Messrs. Kilburn & Co.' Graham was at pains to point out how they, like the emigrants, had benefited from the improving effect of the Homes, by being spared an upbringing in their 'limited' familial circumstances and through placement in work outside (and by implication above) that traditionally reserved for Anglo-Indians. The boys were, the article claimed, 'the first of the domiciled class to be trained for this branch of work'.¹⁵ Though photographed in separate groups, the emigrants and the Howrah placements were dressed in identical attire: suits and ties, pocket watches, and knee-high boots pulled up over their trousers. The version of Anglo-Indian respectability cultivated at Kalimpong was necessarily understood to prepare the boys for destinations that differed enormously – in social structure, employment, and distance from their birth family and the Homes.

According to Graham's later notes on the scheme, it was Reverend James Ponder of Waitahuna in the deep south of New Zealand who 'received' the first two male emigrants in 1908.¹⁶ Ponder was connected to Graham by nationality, vocation, mobility and family. Educated at the University of Edinburgh, Ponder spent time in Australia before visiting his brother and sister in Kalimpong, both of whom worked as medical missionaries there.¹⁷ His experiences in India prompted him to join the ministry, and he returned to Edinburgh to study theology. Ponder was stationed at parishes in Victoria (Australia) and then Fiji, before a bout of ill health saw him travel to New Zealand to recuperate. He stayed. Inducted to the rural Strath Taieri (Middlemarch) parish in 1903, Ponder moved south to Waitahuna in 1906, and then to Wallacetown in 1918, where he died in office in 1920. Settled by Europeans in the 1860s, large run-holders in the parishes where Ponder ministered were now into their second and third generations of what were becoming notable Otago and Southland families.¹⁸ As a fellow Scot who was widely travelled, had spent time in India and was in 1908 settled in the rural heartland of Otago, Ponder was well placed to be of great assistance to Graham (Figure 4.1).

Ponder publicized the settlement of the first two Homes graduates in Dunedin in an article in the *Otago Witness* in August 1908 entitled "'Kim" and His Brothers'. Expecting the readership to understand his reference to the recently published novel which 'most of us have read', he used Rudyard Kipling's portrait of Kim as the context from which to introduce the Homes scheme.¹⁹ The novel was an 'eye-opener' to the condition of many Britons in India that was 'alas ... far more common than is known'. Downplaying the Indian ancestry of the Homes children, the article instead aligned their circumstance with 'the great

Figure 4.1 Towns in New Zealand where early Kalimpong emigrants were placed. Map created by Harley McCabe.

flotsam and jetsam’ of domiciled Europeans in India. Ponder gave a detailed account of the Homes, and upon describing the children’s training in ‘industrial departments’ and farming, announced the placement of the two young men on a farm near Dunedin. ‘This article is mainly written,’ Ponder admitted, ‘with the view of securing similar openings for other lads.’²⁰ The girls’ training was described as ‘at present confined chiefly to lace-making’; however, the recently opened Steel Memorial Hospital at the Homes was to be used for nurses’ training,

and thus 'when a girl leaves the homes she shall be in a position to earn her own livelihood, besides being a well-equipped housewife.' No mention was made of emigrating these young women.

Ponder described the cottage system at the Homes and the aunties 'who by personal example show that work and refinement are not antagonistic', noting that 'one Dunedin lady has lately become an "auntie"' and that other New Zealand women were likely to follow her. The 'auntie' to whom Ponder referred was Mary Kennedy. The meeting to farewell her to the 'Church of Scotland's Kalimpong Mission' brought together the local community engaged in foreign mission work that Holdsworth had referred to, and was described in the Presbyterian publication *The Outlook*.²¹ Among those in attendance was the notable Dunedin figure, and convenor of the newly established Foreign Missions, Rev. W. Hewitson, who spoke about his recent visit to India.²² The convenor of Home Missions was also there, along with two overseas missionaries on furlough, including 'Rev W. MacKean, Kalimpong', who spoke to the congregation about the Homes scheme and the nature of the work in which Miss Kennedy would be engaged.²³ As we shall see further on, two sisters of MacKean's lived in Dunedin and were soon to become part of Graham's local support network for women emigrants.

The strengthening relationship between Dunedin and Kalimpong featured in an article in the *Homes Magazine* in January 1909 entitled 'Emigration', which informed readers that 'New Zealand does not close its doors so tightly as Australia'.²⁴ 'A year ago we sent there the first two boys and the experiment has, as far as we can judge, proved highly successful. ... Two more lads left for New Zealand on 5th December.' This assessment was preceded by an admission that while emigration to 'the freer and more robust Colonies' was initially one of the 'chief outlets we contemplated', the 'closing of Australia to Eurasians and the better prospects apparent in India' meant emigration was now 'less prominent' in the Homes vision. Despite this significant shift, and signalling Graham's stubborn persistence with the scheme, the article stressed that emigration was not 'being lost sight of and we believe that for certain of the boys and girls it offers by far the best career'. Enquiries had been received for 'mother helps' in New Zealand, and the Homes was hopeful of making arrangements to send young women to fill these roles. The article emphasized the Homes' innovative approach, informing readers that the two young men recently sent to New Zealand had been 'trained on the Farm and Mr Goodwin gave them a course of lectures on agriculture'.²⁵

This 1909 article also brought news of emigration to a destination other than New Zealand. The accompanying photograph grouped five departees

together, listing them by destination rather than name: 'U.S.A. Emigrant [2], Renard Train, Sibpur College, New Zealand Emigrant.' The experiment to the United States began in similar fashion to New Zealand, with a Mr and Mrs Brown, who were involved in training on the Homes farm before leaving to settle as 'agriculturalists in Virginia'.²⁶ The Browns took a female graduate with them and sent for her brother and 'another lad' one month later. 'It will be interesting to learn how those three do,' the *Homes Magazine* article noted, 'and if the result is satisfactory we may be able, through Mr Brown, to arrange for more to go to the United States.'²⁷ As in New Zealand, farm labour was seen as the appropriate entry point; it matched graduates to the ideology of opening up the land, and allowed their new lives to begin within the protection of a family connected to the Homes.²⁸ In the United States, however, the scheme did not continue. There were no further reports of graduates emigrating to any of the settler colonies or to the United States prior to Graham's tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1909.

Establishing a New Zealand community

The origins of Graham's later sentiment that New Zealand was 'the best place in the world for the boys and girls of Kalimpong' can be traced to his 1909 trip there. Instructed by his physician to take a health trip, Graham visited Australia and New Zealand to assess their suitability as destinations for Homes graduates. Although the title of his three-page report in the *Homes Magazine* was 'Australia and New Zealand', Australia took up just one-quarter of one page at the end of the article under the subheading 'A White Australia'.²⁹ Graham admitted that the 'cry for more people for the land [was] even louder than in New Zealand', but wrote nothing of the prospects for Homes graduates to settle there. Development of the tropical regions of Australia was the cause of much racial anxiety, he suggested, owing to the debate about the need for 'coloured labour' to work in such conditions. Omitted from this report, but noted in his diary, was Graham's frustration at the stubborn preoccupation of Australian officials with biological calculations of racial status. When he raised the possibility of special consideration for Homes graduates, these officials informed him that even if this was granted, it would only apply to those who were more than 50 per cent European blood, effectively ruling out those he was most keen to emigrate – tea planters' children.³⁰

The New Zealand section of Graham's report, along with his brief diary of the trip, took an entirely different tone to that of Australia. Geographically he found it more suited to the ideal of working the land in a temperate climate. In terms of settler culture, Graham warmed to the familiar feel of Dunedin with its largely Scottish Presbyterian population.³¹ And unlike the complex race questions under debate in Australia, in New Zealand he looked for signs of the reputedly harmonious relationship between British settlers and Māori. In the south, he noted the coexistence of Māori and Scottish place names; in the North Island, he met an 'old Māori lady – tattooed face, MacKenzie tartan dress', and visited a noted school for Māori girls run by a well-known Anglican missionary family.³² In later reflections he would repeatedly credit the success of the scheme in New Zealand to the 'presence of Māori' and to the popular notion that 50 per cent of the Dominion's population 'had Māori blood' and that in time there would be 'complete fusion'.³³ This meant, he hoped, that Homes graduates with darker skin colour might be mistaken for part-Māori, which was something they could 'boast' of; and, whether visible or not, their mixed ancestry would be the norm rather than the exception.

Graham brought with him the first young woman (Aileen Sinclair) to be placed in New Zealand, and planned to visit the four boys already on farms. Upon arrival in Dunedin, they were greeted at the wharf by Aileen's brother Clarence, a 1908 emigrant, and David Kennedy, the father of the Homes auntie mentioned earlier in this chapter.³⁴ Kennedy was a Harbour Board official, and had written earlier in the year to the Customs Department to enquire about Kalimpong women emigrating to New Zealand.³⁵ The image of these two men waiting quietly together at the harbour, Kennedy eager for news of his daughter and Sinclair about to be reunited with his sister, speaks to the intricate ties that formed the nucleus of Graham's local network – individuals of diverse backgrounds brought together by familial connections to Kalimpong and intimate knowledge of the circumstances that underwrote the scheme.

Upon arrival Graham immediately set about calling on numerous individuals and their families to enlist their assistance.³⁶ Although the Ponders had assumed responsibility for placement of the men, Aileen Sinclair's arrival prompted the establishment of a more formal infrastructure of protection for the women. 'The care and supervision of the girls is an anxious and important matter,' Graham noted in his diary, announcing the formation of a 'Committee of Ladies' to shoulder this responsibility. The chair of the new committee, Mrs Scott, was 'already connected to Kalimpong through her brother (Mr MacKean) one of our

colleagues.³⁷ Another member of the committee, Mrs Church, was the wife of a local doctor, and another sister of McKean's. Graham also sought out notable members of the local Presbyterian community. He met Reverend William Hewitson, who was present at the farewell for Mary Kennedy and had just taken up the role of professor at the newly opened Knox (theological) College. At St Andrew's parish, Graham met Reverend Dr Rutherford Waddell. St Andrew's had its own missionary scheme, and Waddell was a key supporter of numerous social reforms.³⁸ Graham no doubt felt at home among this Presbyterian community of men and women busying themselves with social problems associated with the 'old world' and attending to overseas peoples affected by continuing European expansion into the 'new'.

After a stay of one week in Dunedin, which included a trip south to Waitahuna to meet the Ponders, Graham headed north. The next day, the *Otago Witness* carried an interview with Graham, in which he spoke of his visits to the four emigrants working on farms around Dunedin. Though the work was strenuous and the days long, the boys' employers, Graham claimed, were 'perfectly satisfied ... finding them gentler and more refined than the ordinary work-a-day boy; perfectly reliable and trustworthy, and they never skylarked'.³⁹ These genteel traits, held up as positive by Graham, were to be more of a hindrance than a help to many of the male emigrants placed on larger farms. Graham gained an inkling of this when he arrived in Havelock North on the east coast of the North Island to visit the Chambers family, with whom the fourth male emigrant, Eustace Boardman, was placed, at a considerable distance from the southerners. The Chambers ran a substantial estate, comprising some 40,000 acres and incorporating vineyards as well as sheep and cattle. Graham conveyed important distinctions between the emigrants on small family farms in the south and Boardman's situation, which incurred a greater clash of colonial masculinities:

Eustace is but one of a number of 'hands' who live together in special quarters. This necessarily involves a different relationship between employer and employee from that which prevails on a small farm where the lad is practically one of the farmer's household. On the big station, he has to gain and maintain his own position among his fellows, usually a heterogeneous collection of free and independent workmen who are not inclined to err on the side of 'coddling' a new [recruit].⁴⁰

Two days after returning to India, Graham noted in his diary: 'Magazine to Leonard, Clarence, Sydney, Eustace and Eileen, NZ.'⁴¹ These first five emigrants,

along with his supporters in the south, formed the nucleus of the Kalimpong community in New Zealand. Graham's continued contact with them enabled him to use their progress to promote the emigration scheme, and they were useful informants of the local situation. Although his visit to Boardman exposed the challenges young men would face on large farms, Graham was in no way deterred from sending more; but his awareness did perhaps spur him to take care to place siblings in close proximity to each other. Five men arrived in Dunedin in 1910, among them Eric Boardman, who joined his brother in the North Island. The remaining four were dispersed around rural Otago and Southland. In 1911 a second female emigrant, Jean Mackay, and her brother John, were placed with farming families in the southern town of Owaka. A group of three men were placed on farms around Dunedin later that year.

In 1912 a full-page article appeared in the *Homes Magazine* describing 'the biggest farewell we have ever had' for a group of thirteen emigrants bound for New Zealand.⁴² It gave the names of the party and described a social event to farewell them in Calcutta. The emigrants were to travel to Dunedin via Melbourne escorted by Mary Kennedy. The accompanying photograph of the group (Figure 4.2) exhibited a greater degree of formality than previous departures; the girls wore nurses' uniforms and the boys were attired in suits and knee-high boots. By January 1913, the Homes had received news of the

Figure 4.2 The 1912 group to New Zealand. Mary Kennedy (housemother) at centre. Source: *Homes Magazine* 12 (1912), 38. Courtesy National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

safe arrival of the group. James Ponder wrote of the boys' placements, and Mrs Scott had 'no difficulty in arranging places for the six girls who, she reports, have made an excellent impression'.⁴³ The article included excerpts of letters from several of the young women. 'I must say we are enjoying ourselves immensely', one wrote from the ship, mentioning the kindness of 'the friends we have had in Calcutta, Rangoon and Penang all ready waiting to take us out to see the different places'. Networks, then, were not only vital at their destination, but at every point of their voyage. This was particularly true of Australia, where this group and all future Kalimpong emigrants would be required to 'tranship' and stay for several days (or more) while waiting for a boat to New Zealand. This large group proved highly visible, generating media attention and encountering difficulties at Melbourne and Hobart, as one of the emigrants detailed:

The Customs officers came on to the ship and would not allow us to land because we were Eurasians, but Mr Steel and Miss Kennedy got us ashore. It was partly through Lady Carmichael's letter of introduction that we were allowed in. ... We reached here (Hobart) early this morning. This time we were not allowed to go ashore because the man who started all this fuss wired to the officers here not to let us ashore. We hope everything will be alright when we land in Dunedin.⁴⁴

Local media alerted the New Zealand public to the impending arrival of the group. The *Ashburton Guardian*, a small South Island newspaper, picked up the story from the *Calcutta Statesman* and offered a sympathetic reading of the 'Orphan Immigrants'. It listed their names and ages, and stated that the boys would be engaged in farm work, while the girls would become 'lady helps ... for domestic servants are almost unknown in New Zealand, and the "lady help" is treated as one of the family'.⁴⁵ The article noted that others had already been sent to the Dominion, but that the progress of this first 'large batch' would be watched with 'keen interest, for the Kalimpong training of self-help and self-reliance is just what is wanted in the colonies'.⁴⁶ The level of detail in this report suggests a Kalimpong influence in its authorship, and it echoed Graham's approach to the media – a tentative balance between the need for discretion and the desire for some publicity to promote the scheme. Three days later the same publication noted the arrival of a 'batch of Eurasian immigrants' in Melbourne.⁴⁷ No mention was made of the difficulties disembarking the vessel, but it did state that the group was accommodated 'under the superintendence of the Presbyterian Immigration agent'.

The group's arrival in Dunedin was reported in the *Wanganui Chronicle*, a North Island newspaper. The *Chronicle* stressed the structured nature of the scheme and the committees that would oversee their efficient work placements:

Amongst the arrivals by the Warrimoo was a batch of 13 European and Eurasian girls and boys ... under the charge of Miss Kennedy, of Dunedin, to be settled in situations secured for them in New Zealand by the Dominion Committee of the Homes. The party was met on arrival by the Rev J S Ponder (the honorary secretary for New Zealand), and Mrs W.L. Scott (convenor of the Dunedin Ladies' Committee) and the young immigrants were promptly forwarded to their respective destinations.⁴⁸

Although this group tested the borders with larger numbers, their visibility was immediately reduced upon arrival when they were indeed 'promptly forwarded' to their employers and widely dispersed. Mary Ochterloney's letter in the *Homes Magazine* described docking at Dunedin, where half of the group disembarked and were met by their respective employers.⁴⁹ The remaining six, Mary among them, 'stayed on the ship' and journeyed to Wellington, where two of the young men were 'dropped off' along with Evelyn Fullerton, who was the only female emigrant to be placed in nurses' training rather than domestic service. The remaining three ferried to Picton where Ernest Hughes stayed, while Mary and her brother Robert took the train to Blenheim. Although these six were isolated from the Dunedin group, they formed the beginning of a cluster in central New Zealand. Wellington, in the far south of the North Island, and Picton, the port of Marlborough at the northern tip of the South Island, were connected by regular ferries. Graham's contacts in Marlborough may have been made through post-India careerists who were known to settle in this area.⁵⁰

The size of the 1912 group indicated growing confidence in the emigration scheme. Reports in the *Homes Magazine* worked hard to convince readers that the emigrants were integrating into local society. Any concerns about the provision of ongoing support were addressed by printing excerpts of emigrant letters that showed community involvement and employers' letters describing the mutual satisfaction the scheme had brought about. But with the onset of the First World War, the likes of the 1912 'batch' would not be seen again until the mid-1920s. Two smaller parties were sent in 1914, the first comprising two women, the latter a group of three unaccompanied men. This brought the total number of Homes graduates settled in New Zealand in the pre-war period to thirty-three. The large gender imbalance at this stage (twenty-four men and

Table 4.1 Arrivals by gender, 1908–14

Group #	Year of arrival	Men	Women	Total
1	1908	2	0	2
2	1909	2	0	2
3	1909	0	1	1
4	1910	5	0	5
5	1911	1	1	2
6	1911	3	0	3
7	1912	8	5	13
8	1914	0	2	2
9	1914	3	0	3
<i>Total</i>		24	9	33

Source: St Andrew's Colonial Homes Magazine.

nine women – see Table 4.1) reflected the careful placement of the women, who unlike the men were chaperoned from departure to arrival and beyond.

Women and men at work

Prior to Aileen Sinclair's arrival in Dunedin with Graham in 1909, work prospects for the women emigrants were referred to only in vague terms. In 1908 Graham had stated that the girls' training at the Homes was intended to fit them for domestic, nursery and hospital positions in India, which would match them to the 'constant demand' for Anglo-Indian women for such roles.⁵¹ Despite their fathers seeking admittance to the Homes on the condition that they would be trained for 'the colonies', the particularities of the girls' eventual placement there were absent from the early *Homes Magazine* debates and knowledge-gathering exercises. As Ponder noted in the *Otago Witness* article, the opening of the Steel Memorial Hospital in 1908 provided the first opportunity for formal nurses' training, and it was only Aileen Sinclair's emigration that prompted Graham's active consideration of the women's potential place in settler colonies. In 1910, the year following Sinclair's emigration, Lucia King cottage for infants was opened at the Homes. The cottage was used as a site for instructing prospective 'nursery nurses', most of whom were expected to emigrate to New Zealand.⁵² A dedicated domestic science wing and specialist teacher were added in 1916.⁵³

The question, then, was what purpose this gendered training ultimately served for the New Zealand emigrants. In his 1909 post-trip report, Graham claimed

that domestic service was a career that could bring financial independence for the women, given that, 'after a few years' experience, they could easily earn from £40 to £50 a year, with board'.⁵⁴ Yet it was not clear how this 'independent' career path achieved the scheme's wider aims of new beginnings and integration into local communities. For other (white) women entering settler colonies as assisted domestic servants, the role was seen as a pathway to marriage and motherhood, moving them from assisting colonial housewives and mothers to producing their own offspring for the growing colony.⁵⁵ Such a transition might have been envisaged for the Kalimpong women too, but it was certainly not mentioned in any of the early publicity about the scheme. Work, and addressing the domestic service shortage, predominated; along with the need to protect vulnerable young women from harm. Hence in the early years the focus remained almost exclusively on the women's work for – and acceptance into – other people's families, where they were socialized into gendered norms in New Zealand households.⁵⁶

While the men's trajectories were more clearly defined, the experiences of the early emigrants suggest that the idealized pathway from farm labour to land ownership did not accord with rural realities of early-twentieth-century New Zealand. Graham's post-tour reports of the first four men portrayed them as settled and stable, but letters from all four printed in the *Homes Magazine* in 1911 reveal their highly mobile adjustment to the rural labour market and a different path to advancement than that envisaged by Graham. Leonard Williams, originally placed in Highcliff, wrote on behalf of himself and his brother Sydney in Central Otago, west of Dunedin. Both had left from their placement families, preferring to make their way in the colony together. While he was 'very sorry in a way' to leave his previous 'master', Williams described with optimism the life they were attempting to make as rabbiters, which they had read was a 'great money making' venture.⁵⁷ The capital they accrued was enough to buy meagre tools, a few essentials and tents to sleep in; a stark contrast to the protected setting of Presbyterian family farms.⁵⁸ Leonard ended his letter with 'many salaams', noting that they often thought of 'those charming times we passed at Kalimpong'. His letter, well written and delicately phrased, reads as a contrast to the rough life that he described. A portrait of Sydney accompanying the article showed a well-groomed young man in a three-piece suit, complete with a high-buttoned waistcoat and watch-chain on display.

In the North Island, Eustace Boardman wrote of the many and varied situations he had held since Graham visited him in Hawkes Bay. The title of his article, 'A Rolling Stone in New Zealand', along with the introductory note from

the editor, communicated the Homes emphasis on geographic and occupational stability as a prerequisite for earning the title of 'settler'. 'The following letter from an Old Homes Boy has at least the merit of frankness!' the editor noted, adding that 'once he gets anchored' he could become 'a successful colonist'.⁵⁹ Boardman had moved numerous times since Graham's visit. Initially he took on contract work, but was only being paid fifteen shillings a week, while other men were being paid a shilling an hour. 'I asked for an increase,' he wrote, but 'the master refused and I left.' Boardman continued:

Since then I was harvesting for a month with a shilling an hour and then a gardener for a private family. I did all I had to do in the garden and I left. Then I went to the mills where you get a shilling an hour and a shilling and threepence an hour over time. I stayed there for two weeks. I then left through an accident. Then I joined for another two weeks after and stayed there five days and then I left through the food not being good. I then went as a second cook in a hotel at 35s a week, stayed there two weeks, had a fight with the chief cook and left.⁶⁰

Boardman described another four positions he had held and 'left' (at one he 'got the sack' for being 'too greedy') before working in a hotel for five months. From there he moved to a farm with 'the best boss to work for and I am still with him. That is my career since our parting'.

Boardman's description of his itinerant lifestyle was a forerunner to the future experiences of many Kalimpong men, and was a truer reflection of the organization of the rural labouring sector than Graham's antiquated vision.⁶¹ The colonial reality posed a dilemma to the Kalimpong men. Placing them with respectable farming families was meant to facilitate their integration into rural communities from a place of protection. But as single migrants, the clearest way for them to take on the values of local (white) men was to display resourcefulness and enterprise, and to refuse poor wages. As David Roediger found in the United States, the process of new immigrants 'becoming white' often involved a strategic distancing from other minority groups.⁶² In New Zealand, the men's actions can hence be understood as a means of avoiding negative association with 'Asiatic' migrants. At the same time, they entered the questionable category of 'self-seeking' single labourer when settler families were held up as the model for economic and social progress in the colony.⁶³

The experiences of each of these men also reflected their individual personalities. In Boardman's letter there was an almost comic irreverence to all that Graham might have expected of him. This was in contrast to Leonard Williams, who sought 'your opinion if we have done right by taking on what

we have'.⁶⁴ The other early emigrant, Clarence Sinclair, wrote an even more deferential letter that the editors headed 'In Praise of Farming'.⁶⁵ This letter reads as an intentional contribution to the ongoing discussion in the *Homes Magazine* regarding the relative prospects for Anglo-Indian men in various destinations. Sinclair wanted to 'stand up to those who condemn Farming'. He cited the reliance on 'Providence' as cause for his belief that 'there is no other work like Farming after all, don't you agree with me Sir?'.⁶⁶ Sinclair's defence of farming illustrates his awareness of the differing regard in which such labour was held in India, and concern about what his counterparts there thought of his situation. Like all Kalimpong emigrants, Sinclair's transnational lifeway affected the way he made sense of his own progress in the colony and his place in local hierarchies.

For the women, the arrival of the 1912 group substantially increased the number of emigrants, from two to seven. The addition of five women was a test of the scheme and the workings of the Dunedin committee. An update from an anonymous member of the committee upon the arrival of Gertie Plaistowe and Molly Roberts in 1914 articulated its responsibilities, and the concerted efforts to place the women in close proximity to each other. Although both Plaistowe and Roberts were bound for placements further north, they were given a 'small reception' at 'Mrs C's place' in High Street, Dunedin, where the Kalimpong women gathered to spend the evening with them.⁶⁷ 'Anon' mentioned her reluctance to send the young women so far from Dunedin, commenting that Plaistowe 'will be lonely I'm afraid ... but I shall send her a companion next year'. As for the women already settled, the committee reported that Evelyn Fullerton, who had been sent straight to nurses' training in Wellington, was to return to Dunedin. 'Anon' would be 'glad to have her near me'.⁶⁸ Another unnamed emigrant 'did not shine in her first place but we brought her back to Dunedin and she has done so well since that a lady appealed to me to get her a girl like her'. The committee's role did not cease after initial placement, then, and it was active in sourcing employment for future emigrants.

Very few of the excerpts printed in the *Homes Magazine* described the women's domestic duties. The 1912 *Ashburton Guardian* article referred to the women as 'lady helps', a term that was used in Australia to attract a higher class of women to a lighter form of domestic work.⁶⁹ In the Kalimpong case the term was most likely used to ease the stigma around the 'servant' terminology, and to reinforce the public image of the emigrants as respectable, and indeed 'refined'. They were also referred to as 'mother helps'. In 1914 Nellie Savigny sent Graham a photograph of herself with the infant she looked after, writing that although they lived in a 'lovely house' she did sometimes feel like 'throwing

the baby out the window'.⁷⁰ Apparently she shared a room with the child and seldom had an undisturbed sleep. Sharing such close quarters with the infant invites a connection with Savigny's early years on a tea plantation. Like many of the Kalimpong women, she had in the short span of her life dropped in status from being attended by numerous servants and one devoted *ayah*, to being 'self-sufficient' at the Homes, to performing household work and childcare for a settler colonial family.

After the arrival of the 1912 group, *Homes Magazine* articles about individual emigrants were superseded by full-page items about their collective experiences, collating many short excerpts rather than reprinting letters in full. For the women the excerpts chosen reported being 'part of the family' and meeting with the other Kalimpong emigrants on their afternoon off; for the men it was having a 'good boss' and displaying hardy attitudes to the challenges of farm work – milking cows in freezing conditions, working long days and so on. For both men and women, reports about others from Kalimpong became more frequent as the community grew and the likelihood of seeing an 'old boy' or an associate of Graham's increased. Hamilton Melville, who along with Adrian Andrews was working on the Gladbrook Estate in Middlemarch, wrote that he did not 'find NZ bad at all', that he and Andrews were having 'splendid times', and that two other Homes men were on a farm only six miles away.⁷¹ Stuart Lemare, working on a farm thirty miles south of Dunedin, wrote of seeing Jean Mackay 'in town' and learning of her impending marriage.⁷² Another Kalimpong man, James Bishop, met Miss Ponder at the 'Winter Show' (an agricultural event) in Dunedin. 'I did not know her', he admitted, 'but she guessed that I was one of the Kalimpong boys. We had a long chat concerning the Homes'.⁷³

Ponder's 'guess' that Bishop was from Kalimpong highlights the visibility of the emigrants among the predominantly white population of Dunedin at this time. There was racial diversity in the southern city, with the local Kāi Tahu people, plus a Chinese community established from the time of the Otago goldrushes and other non-British settlers. There was also a mixed-race Kāi Tahu community on the Taieri plains, where many of the men laboured.⁷⁴ But in many settings the emigrants' racial difference would have been apparent, and for the men, their ability to blend in likely depended on the ways in which they accounted for themselves. Among the Presbyterian families the women were placed with, skin colour was an important communicator of their place in the household, and would have prompted curiosity. Dorothy Higgins alluded to this when she wrote positively that 'most of the people would hardly believe I come from India; they say I look more of a home girl'.⁷⁵ This kind of racial 'passing'

is an aspect of the Kalimpong scheme that is difficult to engage with since we cannot generalize about the appearance of the emigrants – which brings the legacy of their diverse northeast Indian origins directly to bear on their distant New Zealand experiences.

In distinctive ways, the young women and men from Kalimpong were isolated and faced difficult transitions in their work placements. The women moved in controlled channels within the confines of walls and doors, brushing closely with their host families. The men's experiences were characterized by forbidding landscapes, tough living conditions and the challenge of negotiating a place for themselves. Hamilton Melville's comment that his two Kalimpong friends were 'only six miles away' is revealing alongside Nellie Savigny's fears about her move 'away from Dunedin' to St Leonards, which was just five miles out of town.⁷⁶ While there was greater potential for the women to be included in family life, this was offset by the men's greater mobility, which allowed a fuller and freer integration into the labour market. As we have seen, the men were able to use this mobility to reconnect with siblings and others from Kalimpong. This would also be a feature of their war service.

Encountering the state: The First World War

When war broke out in 1914 there were twenty-three Kalimpong men resident in New Zealand; another four arrived in 1915. Of these, twenty-two men (which Graham later claimed was the total fit to fight) volunteered for service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF).⁷⁷ Their ability to enlist for the main forces without issue was immediately seized upon by Graham as another example of the openness of New Zealand opportunity structures for his graduates, a claim driven by a short-lived controversy at the outset of the war when Anglo-Indians were not permitted to enlist for the British forces in India. Within several months pressure from various groups saw this anomaly rectified.⁷⁸ Yet subsequent *Homes Magazine* reports made it clear that Anglo-Indians fought as a separate contingent, similar to the 'Māori Pioneer Battalion'.⁷⁹ While Graham accepted the differential treatment of Anglo-Indians (including Homes graduates) in India, this was not what he imagined for his New Zealanders. Full social integration was the primary reason for emigration to the settler colonies, and war service was a test of the boundaries of that ideal.

Documentation of the enlistment process is useful here for two reasons. It was the first recorded assessment of the graduates in New Zealand by people and

processes outside of the Homes circle of influence. Second, the various forms required the men to state outright their Indian connections and the familial ties that they gave primacy to. Up to this point, the Homes public archive had suppressed any evidence of lingering connections with their birth families other than siblings. The war files are an important counterpoint to this. The *Homes Magazine* focused on the larger 'Kalimpong family', creating a picture of a global community ignited by the sudden mobility of a large proportion of male graduates, who sought out each other on the battlefields and were assisted by the Homes network in Britain. At the same time, the New Zealand emigrants appear to have developed a stronger sense of national belonging through inclusion on equal terms in all aspects of war service for the NZEF: day-to-day operations, punishment and promotion, and post-war benefits. There is a strong sense in the regular 'Homes and the War' column that the emigrants regarded war as an opportunity to prove themselves – to Graham, to their New Zealand counterparts and to those colonial families and communities at 'home' that they had forged bonds with. Many credited their ability to cope with war service to the discipline and self-sufficiency of their Homes upbringing.

The details of the emigrants' Indian background declared in the enlistment documentation were revealing. First, the open declaration of their paternal Indian connections indicates the normative existence of such imperial careering at a time when India was still very much a part of the British Empire. Second, the files reveal specific information about the emigrants' origins that would otherwise only be located in their personal files at Kalimpong, which are not publicly available. Ten of the servicemen listed their place of birth simply as 'India'; two specified Assam and two Darjeeling; but the remainder recorded surprisingly diverse origins, from north and north-western locations to Hyderabad in central India and Travancore in the southwest. Third, official annotations showed that religious affiliation was an important counterpoint to race, or at least a contributor to a nuanced racial categorization: they were Presbyterian *but* Indian; or Indian *but* Presbyterian.⁸⁰ Finally, the files that contained details of the whereabouts of next of kin in India and Britain attest to continued correspondence with family outside of New Zealand.

It is clear from the documentation that next of kin was the most problematic part of the form-filling process for the Kalimpong men. Many crossed out and amended their initial responses. The 'History Sheet' specified that if next of kin was not local, soldiers should list their 'nearest relative' in New Zealand. Hence those from Kalimpong with siblings in New Zealand required only one person. For the others, a common and satisfactory response was to list family in India

(usually a sister, occasionally a father) followed by a 'friend' in New Zealand (usually their employer or another Homes graduate). The information they gave about their fathers varied. One listed his father's address as simply 'Assam, Bengal, India', while others named the tea estates where their fathers still resided. Several men had no family members listed as next of kin, only New Zealand associates. Overall the men's responses portray a widened sense of home and family; drawing birth family, Graham, colonial families and other Homes graduates into empire-wide kinship formations. Their complex transnational loyalties challenge Graham's overarching narrative of orphans easily attached to colonial families.

Reunions among the Kalimpong men began as they gathered at enlistment centres from various locales around New Zealand and continued as they headed overseas.⁸¹ The 1916 issue of the *Homes Magazine* carried the first reports from the men serving abroad. In Egypt, Hamilton Melville reported from Zeitoun that he had 'met no Homes boy there' but had heard that Leonard Williams was wounded and recovering in England.⁸² This was about to change. Melville was soon joined by Patrick Savigny, who wrote firstly from the Dardanelles and then from Zeitoun, where he met Melville and became aware of 'the boys turning out to do their bit'.⁸³ In the April 1916 issue of the *Homes Magazine*, Melville wrote from Egypt that there were 'at least ten of us around here'.⁸⁴ Their letters described battles as well as everyday life, and the hardships of war prompted reflection just as it did for other soldiers. These sentiments and their regular correspondence with the Homes further challenge the likelihood that their later silence was due to traumatic memories of their upbringing. Of course it also serves as a reminder that some of the men had no other family to write to and no other home to be nostalgic about. Richard Hall wrote a letter to Graham the night before going 'over the top', in which he promised to 'let you know as soon as possible how I am getting on if I am lucky enough to get through it'. He closed the letter with 'well, good-bye for the present, Sir, and love and good luck to you and the Homes. I am an old Boy, Dick'.⁸⁵

War service facilitated mobility beyond occupying the battlefields of Egypt and France; it was also a gateway to Britain. After all of the effort to direct the men into rural New Zealand communities, due partly to the belief they were not welcome in Britain, war brought them to the place that for most Anglo-Indians was a distant and usually unreachable 'home'. But, according to the archives, it was the wider 'Kalimpong family' rather than their birth families that the men connected with there. Clarence Sinclair visited a housemother and told her that it was 'just because she was hard on me I have done so well in NZ'.⁸⁶ Robert

Ochterloney stayed with a Homes associate in Scotland, Mr Pirrit, while on leave.⁸⁷ Hamilton Melville also enjoyed the hospitality of the Pirrits, as did James Bishop, who had a 'happy time' with them and the two Homes aunties he met during the visit.⁸⁸ Pat Savigny wrote in 1918 that he had 'taken quite a fancy to the Old Country, especially Bonnie Scotland,' proving this affection with news that he had married a 'Scottish girl'.⁸⁹

Although the men wrote of close bonds with others from Kalimpong and showed themselves to be thoroughly embedded in the Homes imperial network, they increasingly identified, and were referred to, as 'colonials' and 'New Zealanders' in the *Homes Magazine*.⁹⁰ In 1918 Richard Hall wrote from hospital in England of 'enjoying myself thoroughly here. The hospital is full of New Zealanders and the Medical Staff are all from New Zealand, so we make a happy family'.⁹¹ In the same year, greetings were sent from 'Four Anzacs in France: Dick Hall, Hamilton Melville, Adrian Andrews and Tom Brooks'.⁹² Melville wrote that he survived the battles of Messines and Passchendaele 'without a scratch, though many of my mates were killed ... I will now close with best wishes to all in Kalimpong and a carry on to the boys in Mesopotamia from the Anzacs in France'.⁹³ The greater New Zealand 'family', mateship and ANZAC allies were significant new terms deployed by the Kalimpong men in order to make sense of their part in the war experience.

Just as there is no evidence that race hindered the Kalimpong men's enlistment, nor did Indian ancestry prevent advancement within the NZEF. Robert Ochterloney and Henry Holder were promoted to Corporal, Ernest Hughes to lance corporal, and Sydney Williams and Patrick Savigny to sergeant. Savigny was the first of four Kalimpong men to receive the Military Medal. Hamilton Melville was awarded the Military Medal in May 1918 for 'acts of gallantry', and three months later received Distinguished Conduct Medal, a decoration only awarded on rare occasions.⁹⁴ These rewards for service were publicly touted by John Graham as testament to the calibre of the emigrants, whose actions and sacrifices he believed should bring tangible benefits to the individuals and the scheme; in his words, 'full citizenship'.⁹⁵

The opportunity for social advancement that war held for the men did not have a parallel for the women, and publication of their letters waned as the *Homes Magazine* focused on the servicemen abroad.⁹⁶ There was some interest in their fortunes, including the announcement of a group of five women emigrants arriving in New Zealand in 1915.⁹⁷ A subsequent article praised the efforts of the women in 'keeping the home fires burning', but admitted that 'the question has been raised as to whether the girls were happy in the colonies'.⁹⁸ An emigrant

provided the answer, writing that she felt at 'home' in New Zealand and was a 'real Colonial'. The question of where their domestic service roles were leading remained unanswered, though the possibility of marriage was realized with the announcement of 'Our First Colonial Bride' Jean Mackay, accompanied by brief text but a large reproduction of her beautiful wedding photograph (Figure 4.3).⁹⁹ There was of course an important advantage for the women of not being directly involved in the war – they did not suffer the physical and psychological scars of battle that would affect the daily lives of servicemen who returned.

Ernest Hughes and Richard May, two Kalimpong men in the NZEF, were killed in action. Both were buried in France and their names inscribed on memorials there, and New Zealand newspapers published portraits and news of their demise (Figure 4.4).¹⁰⁰ Privately, their deaths had very different familial repercussions. Hughes's History Sheet (in his war file) made numerous references

Figure 4.3 The wedding of Jeannie (nee Mackay) and John Henderson, 1914. Courtesy Gale private collection.

Figure 4.4 Kalimpong men killed in the First World War. Left: Richard May, *Otago Witness*, 18 October 1916. Courtesy Hocken Collections, Dunedin. Right: Ernest Hughes, *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 August 1918. Courtesy Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19180829-41-7.

to India. He listed his father's and his sister's contact details in India, and noted John Graham was his 'trustee'. It was Hughes's sister, working as a nurse at the Homes in Kalimpong, who was informed of his death and received his medals. Conversely, the only references to India in Richard May's documentation were his birthplace of Assam and a note on his enlistment form that he was a 'Full Blooded Parsee (Indian)'.¹⁰¹ May listed his next of kin as his former employer, 'W Harrison (friend)', of Dipton, in Southland. Hence the remnants of May's remarkable twenty-four-year life, which began on a tea plantation in Assam, was dominated by the sustained intervention by the Homes in Kalimpong, took him all the way to New Zealand and ended on the battlefields of France, came to rest with a farming family in a tiny rural town in southern New Zealand whom he had known for a few short years.

A chance meeting with Michelle Sim, William Harrison's great-great-granddaughter, enables a rich telling of May's relationship with the Harrison family. Sim came across documents and photographs relating to May while organizing her forebears' archive. Her queries to older family members brought a persistent familial memory to the surface. May was remembered as an Indian farmworker whom William's daughter Carrie was 'quite keen on'.¹⁰² According to the family story, any romantic relationship was discouraged due to his Indian ancestry.¹⁰³ A letter from May to Mary Harrison, William's wife, provides an

intimate glimpse into the strength of his relationship to the farming family. Written shortly after his arrival at Zeitoun, the lengthy letter gave a detailed account of life as a soldier in a foreign land. 'You do not know how grateful I am', he wrote, 'for all you have done for me, and the thought of you and Mr Harrison, Carrie, Jean, Bob and Jackie and all Grassmead in general is proof against every temptation in this city.'¹⁰⁴ For this young man, the protective bonds of a colonial farming family gave continuity to the values he grew up with in Kalimpong.

'What a lot I'll have to tell you when I get back', May wrote, 'but then that's only a chance.'¹⁰⁵ His death had a lasting impact on the Harrison family. Carrie kept two photographs of him, the letter to Mary, and newspaper clippings reporting his death.¹⁰⁶ One of the clippings noted that he was 'born at Assam, and was educated at Darjeeling, Northern India' and was 'offered the position of interpreter to Indian troops, with the rank of Sergeant, but declined promotion and went on to France with his unit'.¹⁰⁷ In celebrating May for prioritizing colonial loyalty over personal gain, the clipping also communicated his acceptance as a New Zealander. The persistence of his story through five generations of the Harrison family attests to the legacy of the bonds developed between some of the emigrants and their employers, perhaps especially those cut off from their origin families. Yet several generations later the loss of any detail about the Kalimpong scheme saw the Harrisons puzzle over how it was that an 'Indian worker' ended up in Southland in the 1910s, echoing the confusion of the Kalimpong descendants and gesturing towards the ripples created by the placement of the emigrants with families all over New Zealand.

This chapter has traced the transformation of the Homes emigration scheme from ambitious theory to realization on a small but significant scale in New Zealand. Setting out from Kalimpong in twos and threes, young men and women were received in a discrete manner by Graham's contacts. The men were distributed to farms large and small, which usually meant isolation from anything but tiny local settlements. While the women clustered in colonial towns, theirs too was an isolated existence. The contrast to the crowded and busy life at the Homes must have made this transition extraordinarily lonely. No wonder, then, that the emigrants eagerly anticipated new arrivals and wrote brightly to Graham of their individual and collective progress. The arrival of the 1912 group was a landmark in the scheme. While these larger numbers did not persist, the structures set in place in this period laid the foundation for the continuance of the scheme in the 1920s, and nothing like this level of organization was ever established in any other settler colonial destination.

Hidden from the Homes record was the emigrants' continuing place in their transnational families. Documents in the war files reveal this complex familial status, which in the first year or two after their placement bridged an awkward and formative stage between new settler colonial ties and persistent connections with paternal relatives in India and Britain. War service was also important for highlighting, and substantiating, the difference between placement in India and New Zealand. Fighting for the NZEF took the Kalimpong men overseas, made 'colonials' of them and saw them all return to New Zealand to be further integrated into the fabric of society there. For those placed India, the future was less certain, especially as the Indian nationalist movement gained momentum. But it was the question of raced immigration restrictions in New Zealand – absent from the archive in the 1910s – that would dominate post-war anxieties about the continuance of the scheme.