

APPENDIX.

PAST MISTAKES IN IMMIGRATION.

EXTRACT FROM REPORT ON HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF THE COLONY, 1888, BY THE LATE DR. MACGREGOR, INSPECTOR-GENERAL.

MANY causes have conspired in our history as a colony to intensify the good-nature of our people—at any rate, so far as extravagance in vicarious charity is concerned. Our sensitiveness to suffering has been greatly stimulated by the comparative absence from our towns of those sights of misery and squalor that deaden the feelings by familiarity; and the lavish life we have led since 1870 has made us free-handed to the poor and impatient of the trouble required to find out whether our charity was wisely or mischievously given.

During our years of plenty, when borrowed money was being largely spent, and the prices of wool, &c., were high, I was in charge of the Dunedin Asylum, and remember with what forebodings I regarded the quality of the immigrants that were being poured into the country after the despatch of instructions in October, 1873, to the Agent-General—"To grant free passages, and also, if necessary, advance expenses to port of embarkation and outfit."

Twenty thousand immigrants were, if possible, to be sent out in six months. With wonderful rapidity the results became apparent. From all parts came reports of the evil quality of the immigrants. The Immigration Minister, writing to the Agent-General in June, 1874, says: "I have already called your attention to the fact that the shipment by the . . . included a number of girls out of the Cork Workhouse, and I took the opportunity of remarking on the very undesirable character of such immigration. A perusal of the report of the Immigration Officer at Dunedin will, I think, convince you how very disastrous it is likely to prove to the cause of immigration if such modes of selection as those adopted by Mrs. ——— (who was paid per emigrant) are under any circumstances permitted. The result in the colony of the landing and distribution of such women as these complained of, and of such immigrants as the "young men" whom Mr. Allen states he has ascertained to be professed thieves, and one of them a ticket-of-leave man, is naturally a feeling of indignation and dismay."

No doubt this was an extreme case, but, nevertheless, it is plain that, what with the great influx of a low class of navvies during the height of our public works, and the vicious and degenerate people, of whom so many were introduced at this time, the average of our population in point of quality was considerably deteriorated. My experience as Medical Officer of our largest asylum for so many years has convinced me that the ultimate cost of this degraded class of people to this country is enormous. For instance, here is an account of two families and their asylum history:—

Number.	Name.	Cost per Head. Rate, £1 per Week.	Total Cost.
<i>Family of B.</i>			
I	A. B. (brothers)	£ s. d. 80 2 0	£ s. d.
II	C. B.	274 4 0	
III	D. B.	230 2 0	
IV	E. B.	8 2 0	
V	F. B.	8 2 0	
			600 12 0
<i>Family of C.</i>			
I	A. C., wife	472 2 0	
II	B. C., husband of A. C.	418 0 0	
III	D. C., daughter of A. C. and B. C.	834 2 0	
IV	E. C., "	1,318 2 0	
V	F. C., illegitimate daughter of E. C.	169 8 0	
VI	G. C., husband of F. C., but no blood relation	5 2 0	
			3,216 16 0
			£3,817 8 0

Such people and their offspring are at this moment a fruitful source of those idle and useless persons who bring discredit on the cause of that portion of our people who cannot find employment. They fill our gaols, our hospitals, and our asylums, and, like a swarm of low parasitical organisms, they have, to an extent that is almost incredible, absorbed the outdoor relief that was meant for the self-supporting and struggling poor. I am sure that by far the largest proportion of the aid that has been so abundantly distributed by the various charitable agencies, especially in our large towns, has been spent in supporting a great many idle and vicious persons whose example has had the most pernicious effect in pauperizing the people. It should never be forgotten that the evil caused by the introduction of this class is never finished. The impaired health, low morality, and insanity descend to the offspring, and are a continual drain upon the community.