

young wife, by whom he had a large family, was getting outdoor relief. By the first wife he had a son and two daughters, all married. His present wife has six children. Their weekly aid consists of 14lb. of meat, 6oz. tea, 1½lb. sugar, and 28lb. flour. I noticed in a corner of the room two bags of flour, each containing 100lb., which I was told was allowed to accumulate in the store till it was worth hiring an express to bring it home. The rent paid was 6s. 6d. a week. In another town I found a man who had been injured many years ago, and had ever since been confined to bed paralysed. His wife and mother-in-law, two strong women, with six children, constituted the family. Four of the children were begotten after the father's injury. The allowance from the Benevolent Society was £1 a week. Afterwards I found out that a sum of £19 was paid annually by a friend for the rent. This was passed through the books of the society so as to get the subsidy, and the whole was returned to the family. I could give many cases similarly illustrative of the vices of this outdoor system of relief were I not afraid of causing needless pain, and so I confine myself to what will suffice to found my argument upon.

The following table shows the total amounts spent for various charitable purposes in the four chief united districts of the colony for 1887, including both indoor and outdoor relief. Unfortunately, in Otago no separate accounts were kept for the different parts of the united district for outdoor relief, because the Otago Benevolent Institution looked after the outdoor relief of the whole united district, and did not keep the town and suburbs separate from the rest. Accordingly I found it impossible to compare all the centres in respect of their outdoor-relief expenditure.

United District.	Total Population in United District.	Amount expended on Charitable Aid in United District.	Population in Town and Suburbs.	Amount expended in Towns, &c., on Outdoor Relief.	Cost per Head of Outdoor Relief in Towns, &c.	Total Cost per Head of Charitable Aid.
		£		£	s. d.	s. d.
Auckland	108,728	11,553	59,825	3,788	1 3·19	2 1·5
Wellington	53,246	6,614	30,123	2,332	1 6·57	2 5·81
Christchurch	101,765	17,259	45,769	6,025	2 7·59	3 4·66
Otago	83,696	11,232	2 8·202

The total cost of administration in the four chief districts, so far as I can make out, is: Otago United District, £791 6s. 9d., including cost of management of the benevolent institution; Canterbury North and Ashburton United District, £1,464, including Armagh Street Depôt and Ashburton Home; Wellington United District, £220; Auckland North and Auckland United District, £917, including the refuges.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING OUTDOOR RELIEF IN THE CHIEF CENTRES.

Otago Benevolent (whole district).—August, 1884: 245 cases, consisting of 79 men, 219 women, and 693 children. August, 1887: 137 men, 396 women, and 1,021 children = 431 cases.

Christchurch and Suburbs.—August, 1887: 317 cases—415 adults and 802 children = 1,217 persons (exclusive of infirm and invalid persons or children boarded out). June, 1884: Adults, 350; children, 739 = 1,089.

Auckland and Suburbs.—August, 1884: Adults, 237; children, 304 = 541. August, 1887: Adults, 413; children, 651 = 1,064.

Wellington and Suburbs.—August, 1884: Cases, 115—adults, 125; children, 227 = 352. August, 1887: Cases, 174—adults, 173; children, 248 = 421.

Napier.—August, 1884: 3 adults and 9 children = 12. August, 1887: 79 adults and 173 children = 252. May, 1887: 61 adults and 149 children = 210. May, 1888: 24 adults and 43 children = 67.

I have found, in course of my examination of this system, as any one does who gives it any real study, that, like every one of our chief social problems, it runs down to the central question, Am I my brother's keeper? and, if so, to what extent and why? What, precisely, is the nature and extent of the kinship or community that binds men into the unity we call a commonwealth? Is every man a self-contained, self-centred agent, entitled, because of this, to resist all attempts to limit beyond a certain minimum his private right to judge and act for himself, with the corollary that, having demanded his full liberty, he shall be fully responsible for the success or failure of his life; having succeeded, he has the right to selfishly enjoy; but, having failed, he must silently suffer? The best of all possible worlds it is said results from the untrammelled action of individual self-love. The orthodox economists were the propaganda of this plan of salvation, and our English poor-law legislation reflects, in its varying phases, their struggle with the strong heresy of unscientific and sympathetic human nature. I have found that nothing in the world so rapidly freezes the genial current of the human soul as a house-to-house visitation of the recipients of our outdoor relief. Such an experience soon convinces the most sympathetic philanthropist, if he have any sufficient intelligence to grasp the causes of things, that justice, and not mere good-nature, must be the principle of the State's conduct in dealing with the poor.

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