

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. Allan 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.
FAMILY OF B (BROTHERS).			
I.	A. B. ... ..	£ 80 2 0	£ s. d. 600 12 0
II.	C. B. ... ..	274 4 0	
III.	D. B. ... ..	230 2 0	
IV.	E. B. ... ..	8 2 0	
V.	F. B. ... ..	8 2 0	
FAMILY OF C.			
I.	A. C. (wife) ... ..	472 2 0	3,216 16 0 £3,817 8 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. (ditto) ... ..	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	

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-respecting and the 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 pauperising 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 on the community.

An enormous proportion of the recipients of outdoor relief consists of wives with families, who have been deserted by their husbands. Many of these I believe to have been ill-assorted unions and intimacies struck up among shipmates; and a considerable proportion of them are due to the reasonable assurance with which both the wives and husbands found they could depend on their families being well cared for by the public charities. I am inclined also to think that the disproportionate sums that were spent in Christchurch and the surrounding districts during the period between 1876 and 1886 must, in part, at any rate, be accounted for by the well-known tendency of the pauper class to congregate in those places where an easy-going charity prevails. The North Canterbury Charitable Aid Board consists of a number of public-spirited gentlemen, who have, perhaps, taken more pains, since the introduction of the Act, than any other Board in the colony to cut down the immense charitable expenditure that had become customary in Christchurch; and, notwithstanding all their efforts, it will be seen by the preceding tables that the expenditure is still excessive—partly, as I have suggested, because in former years a large proportion of thriftless people found an easy harbour there.

The report and appendices of the English Poor-law Commission of 1832 is the most authoritative document extant on all questions affecting the administration and practical operation of the poor-laws, and my observation and experience of the outdoor-relief system in New Zealand and its evil effects could not be more forcibly expressed than in their general remarks on outdoor relief. "We have dwelt at some length on outdoor relief, because it appears to be the relief which is now most extensively given, and because it appears to contain in itself the elements of an almost indefinite extension—of an extension, in short, which may ultimately absorb the whole fund out of