The Kallikak Family.

The history of the Kallikak family has been traced and fully described in detail by Dr. Goddard, and his study shows the hereditary nature and sociological bearings of feeble-mindedness.

Martin Kallikak was a youthful soldier in the Revolutionary War. At a tavern frequented by the militia he met a feeble-minded girl by whom he became the father of a feeble-minded son. In 1912 there were 480 known direct descendants of this temporary union. It is known that 36 of these were illegitimates; that 33 were sexually immoral; that 24 were confirmed alcoholics; and that 8 kept houses of ill-fame. The explanation of so much immorality will be obvious when it is stated that of the 480 descendants 143 were known to be feeble-minded, and that many of the others were of questionable mentality.

A few years after returning from the war this same Martin Kallikak married a respectable girl of good family. From this union 496 individuals have been traced in direct descent, and in this branch of the family there were no illegitimate children, no immoral women, and only one man who was sexually loose. There were no criminals, no keepers of houses of ill-fame, and only two confirmed alcoholics. Again the explanation is clear when it is stated that this branch of the family did not contain a single feeble-minded individual. It was made up of doctors, lawyers, judges, educators, traders, and landholders.

New Zealand Cases.

But it is not necessary to go to the records of older countries to find examples of this kind. Unfortunately, this young Dominion, whose history as a European settlement is comprised within the lifetime of its oldest inhabitants, is already reproducing some of the saddest problems of civilization which perplex the people of the Old World. We started with every advantage in the shape of a favourable climate and rich natural resources. The original settlers were, for the most part, men and women of sturdy determination, enterprising spirit, and strong physique.

In the "seventies" a vigorous public-works policy was inaugurated, and great efforts were made to introduce fresh population, the result being that undoubtedly a great impetus was given to settlement, and the country was fairly started on the road to prosperity. But, unfortunately, it is now only too apparent that insufficient care was taken in the selection of immigrants.

The following extract from a statement made to the Committee by Sir Robert Stout, Chief Justice, and President of the Prisons Board, illustrates this point: "The Prisons Board has sometimes brought before it several persons of one family who have offended against our laws, and in the experience I had in 1884 and 1885, when looking after our Hospitals and Charitable Aid Department in the General Government, I found that people obtaining charitable aid had done so for three generations; that is, grandfather, father or mother, and children were all obtaining aid from the Government because they were unable to maintain themselves. Some of the cases were traced, and it was found that the grandfathers, or grandparents, had been originally in poorhouses in the Homeland, and although they came to New Zealand and had greater opportunities than they had in their Homeland, yet their inability to provide for themselves continued."

How serious the problem has already become will be seen from the following illustrative cases selected from a large number given in the evidence:—