

The New Zealander of the Future.

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THE New Zealanders, as a people, seem lately to have arrived at self-consciousness, and to have developed into a distinct unit in the integral parts of an empire. Have they any distinctive characteristics as a people? It is too early to observe and mark national traits; they are yet in process of formation. It may nevertheless be possible to forecast the New Zealander of the future by investigating some of the elements that go to form national character.

Unless we hold the view that different species of *genus homo* were evolved in different parts of the world, it will be necessary to formulate some theory to explain the wide differentiation of races upon the earth—the white, the yellow, the brown, the black; or, as Huxley has it, the Xanthochroic, the Mongoloid, the Australoid, the Negroid. Why is the negro lazy, lively, sensuous; the Malayan sly, reserved, and impassible; the Papuan handsome, sociable, and demonstrative; the Brazilian deceitful, dull, and morose? The above peculiarities have become permanent racial distinctions, and in colour, form and features, the contrast is even more markedly pronounced.

Foremost among the factors which have contributed to divergence of type must be placed physical agents. Says Rousseau: "Climates, seasons, sounds, colours, darkness, light, the elements, food, noise, silence, movement, repose, all act on our bodily frame, and by consequence on our soul." These influences, when brought to bear continuously throughout innumerable generations, cannot fail to have affected the bodily and mental organisation; and as they vary so widely in different places and climes,

they must necessarily, in conjunction with other causes, have helped to produce the widely different results we see at the present day.

It is no new theory that "the mind is governed by the conditions of the body, the body by the conditions of climate and food." Climate affects both mental and moral endowments, the temperament of the body, the texture of the brain, physical energy and mental vigour. "Where snow falls," says Emerson, "there is usually civil freedom; where the banana grows the animal system is indolent and pampered at the cost of higher qualities, and man is sensual and cruel; and where wheat grows, it may be added, there is civilisation; where rice, decay of mental vigour.

It will be seen that the conditions of climate and food are closely allied, if not dependent on one another; and both have an important bearing upon character, because they determine the ratio of labour and leisure in a community. In tropical climates food is plentiful, labour irksome, and leisure abundant; in austere climates food is scarce, labour incessant, and leisure scanty. An excess of labour and an excess of leisure are both inimical to improvement. The Eskimo therefore slays, stuffs and sleeps torpidly; the Equatorial plucks, eats and sleeps indolently. Temperate climates alone lure to exertion and give a just return to labour; and there the cereals form the staple article of diet. Since labour, properly regulated, is the very salt of life in a community, Buckle's statement, if rightly interpreted, is no extravagant one: "The history of most civilised nations may be explained by the chemical constituents of their food." This obviously does not mean