

be wished," the remainder of the theme may be dismissed from further consideration as embarrassing, deceptive, and entirely unnecessary.

Before entering on the question of what we must do to induce the miners now temporarily located amongst us to adopt this Colony as their future home, it is necessary that we should arrive at a clear understanding of what the elements are of which the mining population is composed, of the object which the miners have in view in coming to this Colony, and the reasons which induce them to go elsewhere to spend the money made here. Before prescribing for the apparent disease, it is advisable to inquire into the cause of the disorder, and to direct the remedy to a removal of that cause, rather than to dealing with the effect. First, then, as to what the miners are. Miners for gold, unlike miners for other metals, are not, as a rule, men who have from youth been brought up to the occupation. The number of those who have been so trained is very small indeed, and the great mass of the gold-mining population is like an army—made up from recruits drawn from all grades in society, from all trades, and from almost all professions and occupations. These men have usually to serve a long and severe apprenticeship to the work of digging; but however long that apprenticeship may be, few diggers regard digging as their settled occupation. The professional man who abandons his profession, the tradesman who abandons his craft, or the husbandman who abandons his cultivation of the soil, for the miner's pick and shovel, does not do it with a deliberate intention of devoting the remainder of life to the new pursuit. Digging is too uncertain a pursuit, and a digger's life one of too great hardship, to induce any one to follow it as an ordinary occupation; but, paradoxical though it may seem, it is this very uncertainty which constitutes the great attraction. In the sense that every French soldier under the Empire was said to carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack, every claim may be said to have a fortune in it, and few as the great prizes of digging are, it is the *chance* of obtaining sudden competence or wealth—the possibility of obtaining at one stroke, what many years of ordinary labour in a regular vocation would scarcely yield, which induces men to give up those regular pursuits and adopt the digger's life for a time. Year after year they toil patiently, often making less than they could make much easier in other ways, but still toiling patiently on, in the hope that each new claim will be the lucky one which will enable them to give up digging, by rendering them able to support themselves comfortably, without returning to the occupation they have abandoned. Hope lies at the bottom of each hole sunk, as at the bottom of Pandora's box. The uncertainty of his occupation naturally reacts on the digger, and makes him rather an uncertain being. The hope which induces him to toil on month after month, when barely making what, in his peculiar vocabulary, is termed "tucker," renders him ever ready to accept in their entirety, the almost invariably highly coloured and greatly exaggerated reports regarding new discoveries. Having been comparatively unsuccessful where he is, he readily believes that the discovery of a new field, is the opportunity which he has so long waited for, and so, without much reflection, the old claim is abandoned and off he goes with the rush to the new field. This tendency to believe in new rushes, where distance invariably lends enchantment to the view, renders it an exceedingly difficult matter to settle diggers permanently in one locality, so long as they remain diggers only. There are also many special difficulties in the way of inducing them to adopt this Colony as their home, when they are in a position to give up digging and to betake themselves to some other pursuit. In the first place the mining population of this Colony has been almost entirely drawn from that of Victoria, and a very large number of the steadiest (and therefore most prosperous) men have homes and families in the sister colony. These men would make the most desirable settlers, but as a rule, they have temporarily absented themselves from their homes and families for the purpose of making money here, to spend there. Living is so much cheaper in Victoria, and so much more comfortable than on our comparatively young gold fields, that these men prefer to leave their wives and children there rather than bring them down here. While separated, they remit to their families all the money they earn beyond that necessary for their own keep, and portions of this money are often invested in mining speculations on the other side. *En passant* it may be observed, that although remittances of this kind do not appear in any return of exports, they constitute the most important element in any drain of capital from which the Colony may be suffering. The careful steady men who thus make a convenience of the wealth of our gold fields, and who return to their homes when they have made a sufficient sum of money for investment elsewhere, are the very men whom we should most earnestly desire to retain permanently amongst us; but, as will readily be conceived, no slight inducement will be required to make them break up the homes already formed, and, instead of returning themselves to Victoria, bring their wives and children down here to build up new homes in this Colony.

What, then, are the relative advantages of New Zealand and Victoria? The Middle Island certainly cannot rival the sister Colony in respect of the agreeability of climate, although it may compare successfully with it in point of salubrity. In all the arts and conveniences of civilization, we are, as the youngest Colony, greatly inferior. The cost of living, too, is much higher here than there, so that we have no imaginary or slight disadvantages to contend with and overcome, before we can render New Zealand a more desirable place of residence than the Colony to which the miner is already strongly bound by old ties. Under the new land laws of Victoria, *bona fide* settlement is being carried on to large extent, and every effort is made by the Legislature to encourage and promote this movement. Here, however, is one of the points on which we might, if we would, make our Colony more attractive to the miner, than Victoria. We have large areas of land, admirably adapted for settlement, and if our legislation, in respect to the disposal of this land, was but as liberal as the legislation of Victoria, the much greater natural productiveness of our land would counterbalance many other disadvantages, and do much to increase our attractions. Naturally, New Zealand is better adapted for the settlement of an Anglo-Saxon population than any part of the Australian continent; but the disadvantages under which we at present labour, are, to a great extent, of our own creation, and are, to an equally great extent, remediable. In the southern gold-yielding Provinces there is an abundance of land, capable of supporting a large and thriving population, yet it has been, to all intents and purposes, rendered as useless as an attraction to settlement as if, instead of being fertile land, only requiring a moderate amount of tillage, to yield abundant crops, it had been bare and rugged rocks.