

The most feasible plan for promoting education amongst them in the first place, and one that would carry with it the approbation and co-operation of the Natives, as it would obviate the chief objections and difficulties in the mind of the parents, concerning the sending their children while very young to a distance to be educated, would be to establish small village schools where their children could be taught the first rudiments of education, instead of endeavouring to establish a central school at any particular place. This plan, however, is not entirely free from difficulties, the chief obstacle to its success would be the difficulty of obtaining proper teachers, as the unpleasantness of many of the duties to be discharged in connection with the education and management of native children, deters many otherwise well qualified persons from engaging in the work.

SOCIAL CONDITION.

Viewed as a whole, their social condition is very satisfactory; their clothing as a rule is not inferior to that worn by the labouring classes, and their domestic habits are gradually assimilating to the Europeans. Their houses are fast assuming a respectable appearance, most of them are built of wood, and almost all have doors, windows, and chimneys.

At Wakapuaka and Takaka, several very neat boarded houses have been erected during the last two years. Every encouragement is held out to all who feel disposed to erect a better class of dwellings, in place of the hovels in which they have been accustomed to reside, by providing them with bricks for chimneys, windows and doors, and the necessary ironmongery, at the expense of the Native Reserve Fund. They are also assisted in their industrial pursuits from the same source, in the purchase of carts, ploughs, harrows, harness, and agricultural implements, conditionally that the recipients pay half the cost. Medical attendance is also provided for them out of the Fund, as well as clothing for the aged and decrepit.

PHYSICAL CONDITION.

The numerical status of the people is about stationary, the births keeping pace with the deaths. The total population in the districts under review amounts to 920, in the proportion of 523 males to 397 females; the children form little more than one-fourth of the whole. But a very small proportion of the Native women rear children. The want of fecundity in the females has been attributed to the illicit intercourse which takes place between the sexes from a very early age. This habit, however, prevailed to a greater extent amongst the natives in former years, during the periods when the race was increasing, than it does now, so that the sterility of the women must be traced to other causes. In former years they frequently gave birth to ten and twelve children, but such cases are very rare now. The deficiency of vigour in the reproductive powers of the race has been attributed by some to the circumstance of their subsisting mainly on a vegetable diet; but other nations of the world exist in perfect health, and multiply on a diet of which animal food forms but a small part. There would seem, therefore, no reason why the Maori population, dwelling in a state of quietude, should not increase in the same geometrical progression, under similar circumstances, without there are other causes for their decrease. It has, however, often occurred to the writer, that the true cause of their gradual decay lies in the breeding in-and-in, so to speak, that such a comparatively small and insular population must of necessity have had to do, from their long isolation from that intermixture of different blood which is so essential to the maintenance of the vigour of a race. That, in fact, they are becoming from natural causes *effete* and worn out.

Subjoined, is a return of the cases treated by the medical officers in the Provinces of Nelson and Marlborough, during the three years ended 31st December, 1871, by which it will be seen that diseases of the chest predominate.

MEDICAL RETURN.

Infantile diseases and Dentition	...	...	...	...	24
Diseases of the Urino-Genitory organs	...	...	...	...	30
Diseases of the chest	...	...	...	...	336
Febrile diseases	...	...	...	...	23
Diseases of the abdomen	...	...	...	...	80
Rheumatism	...	...	...	...	96
Diseases of the eye	...	...	...	...	66
Accidents	...	...	...	...	40
Skin diseases	...	...	...	...	30
Scrofula	...	...	...	...	22
Various	...	...	...	...	73
Total cases treated	...	...	...	...	820

Of the above, 816 were relieved or cured, and four died. Besides the latter, several deaths occurred in the Pelorus from low fever, during the summer of 1871.

A Circular has been issued to the Natives informing them of the existence of small pox in the Colony, and drawing their attention to the importance of being vaccinated.

ATTENTION OR OTHERWISE TO AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS.

The industrial stimulus the Natives received in the early days of the Colony, through the steady influx of settlers, and increased demand consequent thereon for pigs, grain, potatoes, and other native produce, which led them to vie with the Europeans in the cultivation of the land, has diminished year by year, until little attention is now paid by them to agricultural operations, further than to raise a