

rather sneered at at the present. The bed of the Kyeburn River is thought to contain such ground as I have just described, but so covered and surfeited with tailings as not to make it worth while to remove them, but fortunately the Kyeburn is subject to heavy floods, and as soon as sluicing ceases at the head of the river, the scouring of the watercourse will open out a new and by no means poor diggings. The *modus operandi* is almost entirely ground-sluicing, but the samples of gold prove that there are quartz reefs in the neighbourhood. Kyeburn for a few years past has been better known for its coal than its gold; for Naseby, a very cold place in winter, has been supplied up to its demands almost entirely from the Kyeburn coal pits. That part of the country is streaked with splendid seams of coal, only two of which have been opened for use. These seams lie at an angle of from 45° to 65° with the horizon; the breadth about 15 feet. They all run in the same direction, about 10° 21' east of the meridian. Durward and Co., coal miners, have been employed for nine months past in sinking two shafts, and timbering them. They have reached a depth of 52 feet, and intend to sink to 100 feet, to work the seam at a thickness of 15 feet. As firewood is so scarce and dear at Naseby, this discovery of coal has proved a great boon to its inhabitants, and the enterprising men who have found it will be, I believe, well rewarded for their trouble.

None of the quartz reefs in the district are being worked at present, but it is generally believed that those of the Rough Ridge as well as Shag Valley will yet prove remunerative, though not pay great dividends. The miners at Hyde, Hamilton, and Macrae's are for the most part old settlers, who have their cultivated paddocks, gardens, and substantial houses, with all the appearance of permanent settlement. I have no doubt these men have work in hand that will last a lifetime; but I hear of no new ground nor signs of encouragement for new comers, and the townships are most unattractive looking spots, with their huge gaps of old worked ground and conglomerated piles of *débris* and tailings.

In concluding my report I would draw attention to a class of settlers that is (unobtrusively and without expense to the country) doing more than any other towards its advancement and settlement, more especially to be regarded at the present time, while the Government considers it wise to grant free passages (at a cost probably of £15 per head) to adult immigrants, whose security for remaining in the Colony is not to be compared to that of the class referred to. I speak of the married women and men. The latter, be they miners, tradesmen, or of the four professions, while working themselves by mental or manual labour, are rearing young families to take a permanent and responsible position in New Zealand's future. The girls are being taught to sew, to cook, and perform all kinds of domestic labour, with due regard to accomplishments; and the boys, while undergoing a course of education, are being taught to be independent, by learning trades and a knowledge of field pursuits, such as ploughing, sowing, and fencing. These young people, many hundreds of whom, although not counted in the estimates of mining population, are growing into woman and manhood, and acquiring a taste for domestic life, are beginning to influence the actions and movements of their elders. Sons and daughters getting married are causing parents to invest their means in establishing themselves near their offspring; and many a township, once almost deserted, is again reviving, owing its success, its Athenæums, Public Libraries, and Literary Institutions to the efforts of families who, finding their numbers increasing so fast, have been obliged to make permanent homes for themselves, though too often without having originally so intended. In Naseby alone there are about 250 children, and in comparison with the adults the other townships in the district are equally well supplied.

Another benefit to the Colony at large, and the mining populations in particular, is being conferred, I observe, by the increasing number of breweries. The labour of mining is so great a tax on the constitution, requiring (it is argued) stimulants to counteract the evil effects of continual working in water, and the habit of imbibing strong drinks so prevalent on the gold fields, that it will only be by gradual means the slaves to alcohol can be emancipated, and the vile dens, where poisoned decoctions are bottled and capsuled to entrap unwary victims into nets that grip their bodies and souls, can be extirpated. The brewers are becoming the middle men between drunkards and abstainers, and consequently are benefactors to society, as they are encouraging a taste for a far less pernicious beverage, free or nearly free from drugs (if their periodical declarations on registration can be relied on), and I am rejoiced to say men are beginning to prefer beer for their meals to spirits and bad wine. It is to be hoped that this influence will lead to the adoption of still milder refreshments, when it is remembered how many families have suffered, how much terrible affliction has ensued, how many lives have been lost, through the intolerable curse that has for so many years pervaded the colonies.

I have, &c.,

H. A. STRATFORD,

Warden.

The Under Secretary for Gold Fields, Wellington.

No. 15.

Mr. Warden SIMPSON to the UNDER SECRETARY for Gold Fields.

SIR,—

Warden's Office, Clyde, 7th May, 1874.

I have the honor to hand you the statistical returns required by your circulars of 7th and 10th January, together with a general report on the district. In these returns I have treated the district under my charge, which now embraces the Teviot and Black's, as one where necessary, specially mentioning these places, but only as divisions. The fact that many of the places I have charge of I only visit once a month, must be my excuse for the returns not having been sent before.

Warden's General Report for the Year ending 31st March, 1874, on the Dunstan District, Otago, comprehending the Sub-Districts of Clyde, Cromwell, Alexandra, Black's, Teviot, and Nevis.

During the year the population of this district, which, it will be remarked, has had the districts of Black's and Teviot added to it, has considerably diminished, owing, I think, chiefly to the great demand,