

## TWIN BIRTHS.

There were 242 cases of twin births (484 children), and triplets were registered in three instances, in 1905. The number of children born was 23,682; the number of mothers was 23,434: thus, on an average, one mother in every 97 gave birth to twins, against 93 in 1904, and 97 in 1903.

*Illegitimacy*

The births of 1,082 children were illegitimate: thus 46 in every 1,000 children born were born out of wedlock, against 45 in 1904.

The following table gives the rates of illegitimacy in Australasia. The rate in 1905 in New Zealand was less than in any of the Australian States except South Australia and Western Australia:—

*Proportion of Illegitimate Births in every 100 Births.*

| Year. | Queensland. | New South Wales. | Victoria. | South Australia. | Western Australia. | Tasmania. | New Zealand. |
|-------|-------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1896  | 5.22        | 5.71             | 5.63      | 3.45             | 5.61               | 5.91      | 4.48         |
| 1897  | 6.02        | 6.58             | 5.42      | 3.53             | 5.27               | 5.74      | 4.41         |
| 1898  | 6.04        | 6.93             | 5.29      | 3.62             | 4.99               | 5.09      | 4.23         |
| 1899  | 5.97        | 7.15             | 5.49      | 3.95             | 4.91               | 6.08      | 4.40         |
| 1900  | 6.40        | 7.01             | 5.91      | 4.24             | 4.82               | 5.43      | 4.63         |
| 1901  | 5.93        | 7.16             | 5.58      | 3.98             | 3.88               | 5.94      | 4.57         |
| 1902  | 6.04        | 6.60             | 5.51      | 4.36             | 3.96               | 5.36      | 4.46         |
| 1903  | 6.76        | 6.71             | 5.73      | 4.18             | 4.69               | 5.61      | 4.55         |
| 1904  | 6.89        | 7.12             | 5.74      | 4.01             | 4.36               | 5.82      | 4.52         |
| 1905  | ...         | 7.37             | 5.61      | 4.37             | 4.19               | 5.52      | 4.57         |

These figures show the proportion of illegitimate births to every 100 births for this colony to be very steady for the period 1896–1905; the difference amounts only to 0.09 per cent. on a comparison of the first and last years.

The total number of births registered was 19,299 in 1886 and 23,682 in 1905, while the illegitimate births rose from 602 to 1,082. The causes that led to the fall in the birth-rate certainly did not greatly affect the number of illegitimate children.

The number of spinsters in the colony between 15 and 45 increased during the ten years from 65,035 (census 1891) to 100,310 (census 1901), or at the rate of 55.9 per cent., while the illegitimate births increased from 638 to 937, or at the rate of 46.9 per cent. only.

It would therefore appear that the larger proportion of illegitimate births now obtaining cannot with any certainty be taken as indicative of increased looseness of living on the part of the people.

The following figures, showing the rate of illegitimacy per 100 births in Australasia and in the United Kingdom, are based on statistics for a period of five years in the former and ten years in the latter:—

| Country.                | Illegitimate Births per Cent. | Country.              | Illegitimate Births per Cent. |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| New South Wales ...     | 6.9                           | Tasmania ...          | 5.8                           |
| Victoria ...            | 5.7                           | New Zealand ...       | 4.5                           |
| Queensland ...          | 6.4                           | England and Wales ... | 4.2                           |
| South Australia ...     | 4.2                           | Ireland ...           | 2.6                           |
| Western Australia... .. | 4.3                           | Scotland ...          | 7.2                           |

Of the total number of children born in Australasia during the five years ended 1900, 5.67 per cent. were illegitimate, as compared with 4.42 per cent. in the United Kingdom for the same period.

The figures in the next table, which give the percentages of illegitimate births in a number of foreign countries, cover in most cases a period of five years.

| Country.    | Illegitimate Births per Cent. | Country.        | Illegitimate Births per Cent. |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Germany ... | 9.08                          | France ...      | 8.82                          |
| Prussia ... | 7.68                          | Belgium ...     | 7.67                          |
| Bavaria ... | 13.43                         | Netherlands ... | 2.60                          |
| Saxony ...  | 12.89                         | Sweden ...      | 11.13                         |
| Austria ... | 14.20                         | Norway ...      | 7.43                          |
| Hungary ... | 9.13                          | Italy ...       | 6.45                          |