

it not strange that we do not have regard to the fact that, as the seeds of evil are usually sown in childhood and youth, it is here that investigation should commence? ”

PRIMARY CAUSES.

Among the primary causes of the neglect of children the following may be mentioned: Parental ignorance and incapacity or indifference, which is not confined to the poorer classes, and which generally results in the “dragging-up” of ill-disciplined, ill-nourished, and ill-educated children; living in slum areas or in overcrowded areas where a large part of a child’s time must be spent on the street; street trading and the cupidity of many parents and employers; parental indulgence, lack of parental control, and excessive freedom to children, especially in the evenings; desertion by parents; intemperance of parents, with the consequent deterioration of home-life, and often the lack of the ordinary comforts of life and the essentials for healthy living; employment in unskilled labour; defective education; and lack of reasonable means of occupying leisure-time after leaving school. Comment on these causes is unnecessary, since their inevitable effect on child-life is surely obvious enough.

REMEDIES.

Much more would be done to remove or check the above causes of child-misery if we fully realized the value of child-life and definitely and actively accepted the principle that every child has the right of having at least “a chance” in life. We must dispute any so-called liberty that conflicts with the child’s undoubted right, even if in consequence we interfere with bad parents or vested interests. I am able here only to hint at some of the possibilities of remedial action.

THE HOME.

It has to be admitted with regret that home influence is not so strong nor of so fine a type as it was a generation or so ago. Families are more divided in their interests, occupations, and pleasures, and the intimacy and co-operative relationships which used to be characteristic of most homes are now, as a rule, of a very slender character. A number of children very early become independent of their parents, especially at the present time, when the high wages received by many young boys and girls are not promoting steadiness and thriftiness of character, but are fostering habits of selfishness and wilfulness. Not only for the sake of the home and of the children, but for the sake of the future of the nation, the importance of the home and of efficient and economical management of domestic affairs needs to be more clearly recognized. Home-management as a technical occupation in which almost half of the adult population is engaged is as worthy of consideration in the course of instruction for all girls as almost any subject in the primary, secondary, and technical school curricula.

A well-known writer on subjects concerning women says, “A sound knowledge of the household sciences and arts may serve not to tie a woman more to the store-room and the kitchen, but to enable her to get better results with the expenditure of less time and energy, by fitting her to apply to everything, simple and complex, within the household the master mind instead of the mind of the uncertain amateur.”

By means of instruction in domestic science we should not only train our girls to be good home-makers, but we should restore the dignity of the work of the home that false modern ideas seem to have undermined. The fountain-head of the strength and virtue of a nation is the home-life of its people. It is for this reason, *inter alia*, that I have so strongly insisted that there must be in our primary and secondary schools a better and more general provision for training our girls in the noblest and most refining of all the occupations a woman can engage in. Owing to the importance of this subject it is now being given its rightful place in our school course of instruction.

UNFIT PARENTS.

By the pressure of public opinion, by giving temperance instruction in schools, and by every legitimate means we should endeavour to prevent the steady destruction of child-life and happiness through intemperance. Where intemperance is associated with poverty and squalid home-conditions, as is very often the case, the