

CHILD LIFE AS A NATIONAL ASSET.

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The importance of child-life, as a National asset, has, perhaps, never in the history of the British Empire been brought into greater prominence than at the present moment, when thousands of our fellow-countrymen are perishing on the battlefield, in the prime of manhood. As an old member of the Peace Society, and one who has always regarded war as the combination of all the horrors and atrocities of which human nature is capable, I do not hesitate to say that England and her gallant Allies have never entered into a war with more justification, nor with a higher and nobler sense of duty, than in the present sanguinary strife. Would that I were twenty years younger, and physically fit to take my stand—a position which every self-respecting citizen of military age should assume at the present moment—in one of the great battlefields of Europe, where the bravest of our countrymen are heroically fighting for the destruction of an aggressive militarism that seeks to establish its domination, regardless of every principle of honour, or generally-accepted standard of morality. But for those to whom a position in the actual fighting line is denied, there are other national duties that afford an opportunity to supplement the valorous actions of the warriors at the front, in upholding the sacred cause of civilisation. For even amid the whirlpools of war, with its attendant uncertainties and disappointments, the great social questions that deal with life are never stationary, as the underlying facts upon which they are based move onward with the ceaseless current of national life. While I am in no way desirous to under-estimate the gigantic struggle in which our country is at present engaged, or the supreme human importance to the world at large of its ultimate result, I wish to consider, for a few moments, one aspect—by no means the least important—of the great social problem that confronts our country, viz., Child-life as a National Asset.

Historical Sketch of the Factory System.

In the middle of the eighteenth century cotton, as an article of commerce, was scarcely known in England; and the pioneers of what was afterwards to become the great industry of the North of England carried on their weaving

in the domestic workshop, where the apprentice and the journeyman worked side by side with the employer in his house. It was not until towards the end of the century that owing to the inventions of such men as Hargreaves, Arkwright, and others, the domestic workshop was abandoned for the large factory. Work that was formerly done only by strong muscular men could, by the then recent inventions, be accomplished by machinery attended to by children. A demand for child labour was thus created, and hordes of pauper children were drafted into Lancashire from the various workhouses throughout the country and placed in the newly-erected mills as "apprentices." These "apprentices," some only five years old, were bound to serve until they were twenty-one, and one has only to read the reports of the various Commissions to form a slight conception of the brutality of the system. Churchwardens and overseers of parishes trafficked in the lives of pauper children, who were neglected in education, morals, and health.

The earliest legislation for the protection of such children against their employer's insatiable avarice was in 1802, when there was passed "an Act for the preservation of the health and morals of apprentices and others employed in Cotton and other Mills and Cotton and other Factories" (42 Geo. III., c. 73). This Act was in reality an extension of the Elizabethan poor laws relating to parish apprentices, and applied only to cotton factories. It provided for the cleansing of such factories by two washings of quicklime yearly, and for the admission of fresh air by means of a sufficient number of windows; it prohibited apprentices being employed for more than twelve hours a day, but made no limitation as to age; and, lastly, it provided that all apprentices should be instructed in the principles of the Christian religion.

Shortly after the passing of this Act the use of steam power in cotton factories became universal, and the factories that had been erected on the banks of streams were abandoned and supplanted by others erected in large populous towns, where children could be procured in sufficient numbers and employed without being engaged as apprentices. The result was that the system of "apprenticing" pauper children died a natural death, and the employers were thus enabled to obviate the legal restrictions as to time limit, since the Act of 1802 only applied to "apprentices." In 1816 Sir Robert Peel procured a Committee of the House of Commons to examine into the expediency of a Bill to apply the provisions of the Act of

1802, not only to "apprentices," but to all children who worked in factories. Peel himself put in a paper as evidence, in which, after pointing out that children of seven, and younger, were often worked for thirteen and fourteen hours a day, says:—"Such indiscriminate and unlimited employment of the poor, consisting of a great proportion of the inhabitants of trading districts, will be attended with effects to the rising generation so serious and alarming that I cannot contemplate them without dismay; and thus that great effort of British ingenuity whereby the machinery of our manufactures has been brought to such perfection, instead of being a blessing to the nation will be converted into the bitterest curse." (Parl. Papers (1816), 397 A., p. 133.)

In 1819 it was enacted (f.n. 59 Geo. III., c. 66) that "no child shall be employed in any description of work for the spinning of cotton wool into yarn, or in any previous preparation of such wool, until he or she shall have attained the full age of nine years" (s. 1.): that no person under 16 shall be employed for more than twelve hours a day (s. 2): with 1½ hours for meals.

In 1831 the "Ten Hours' Bill" was introduced into the House of Commons, but it did not reach the Statute Book until sixteen years later (10 Vict., c. 29). The struggle over this Bill was very bitter, and is a striking illustration of how slow the State has been to recognise that a child is something more than a mere chattel, to be used for the means of accumulating wealth, regardless of the blasting effects of such ill-usage on the child. As an instance I would refer to the following, dated 25th February, 1836:—

"MEMORIAL OF MILL OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS OF MILLS, MASTER SPINNERS, AND MANUFACTURERS OF OLDHAM.

"Your Memorialists humbly submit that it is absolutely necessary to the carrying on of the Cotton Trade with advantage to allow the employment of children of 11 years of age for 69 hours a week. . . . Your Memorialists are favourable to a restriction of the employment of young persons under 21 years of age to 69 hours in the week."

Contrast this attitude with that of Prussia, as mentioned in a letter, dated 28th March, 1833, written by the eminent political economist, J. R. McCullagh, to Lord Ashley:—

"I would not interfere between adults and masters; but it is absurd to contend that children have the power to judge for themselves as to such a matter. I look

upon the facts disclosed in the late report as most disgraceful to the nation; and I confess that, until I read it, I could not have conceived that such enormities were committed. Perhaps you have seen the late work of M. Courin, who was sent by the French Government to report on the state of education in Germany. It is well worth your lordship's attention. In Prussia, and most other German States, *all* persons are obliged to send their children to school from the age of 7 to 13 or 14 years, and the education given to them is excellent; as much superior to anything to be had in this country as it is possible to conceive. This is the sort of interference that we ought gradually to adopt. If your Bill has any defect, it is not by the too great limitation, but by the too great extension of the hours of labour."

One of the pleasing incidents in the struggle for the rights of children against the sordid greed of their employers was the manner in which Daniel O'Connell championed the interests of childhood. Speaking in the House of Commons on 5th July, 1833, he said:—

"There ought to be no more delay. And what was it they were delaying about? It was whether a child should work more than a negro in the West Indies. When they were proposing apprenticeship for the negroes they did not dare to talk of more than ten hours' work, and now they were to debate whether a child was able to work more than a grown man. . . . The principle was clear, the House was bound to protect the children. It was impossible to look to the first volume of evidence without seeing the fact: then why not legislate at once? Oh! there might be a counterbalancing evil. If a child's labour were stopped, a yard of calico might not be spun: and if a child were prevented working itself to death, a spinning jenny would be stopped for an hour. It was not denied that to a certain extent the evil complained of did not exist. There was human life on the one hand, and they were to calculate on the other how much less cotton would be made if a given number of children were not killed in the year."—(*Hansard*, Vol. 19, p. 232.)

Let us now regard the position of children in Ireland. The "Memorial of the Hibernian Philanthropic Society to the Select Committee of the House of Commons for the Relief and Employment of the Poor in Ireland," which is dated 1st July, 1823, and signed by Lord Cloncurry as Chairman, states:—

"In the city of Dublin, 220,000 souls, we see a large

proportion of the youth rising up under our view who have no means of gaining a livelihood, save by thieving and prostitution. In every labour and handicraft occupation there is a large surplus of hands, the decay of business having had a double operation, to drive the adult out of occupation and to prevent the youth from being taken as apprentices. It is true that our city abounds in charitable institutions, where destitute children are reared in vast numbers; but it is not necessary to remind an enlightened Committee of the House of Commons that the certain result of all such establishments when adequate means cannot be provided for their employment, when the children shall have arrived at maturity, is but still further to add to the pauper population, already so overwhelming: the finer feelings of our nature are then converted into the means of aggravating the evils under which the country suffers."

In 1840 a Select Committee of the House of Commons took evidence on Mills and Factories, and the Superintendent of Factories, Mr. J. P. Hudson, said:—

"In Ireland there are 95 mill owners and 110 factories. There are 24 Cotton Factories, 40 Flax, 31 Woollen; the latter principally in the South; employing 15,000 hands of all ages, of which only 161 are under 13, and these are employed in 8 mills. There are 7,000 between 13 and 18." (Par. 5516.)

"I should say in factories like Mr. Mulholland's at Belfast (now the York Street Flax Spinning Co., Ltd.), the largest factory of the kind in the world, where 700 or 800 workers are employed, there are not more than six or seven children who would not at once be pronounced on view to be above 13." (Par. 5587.)

This view was borne out by Lord Ashley, who stated on introducing the first reading of the Calico Print Works Bill (8-9 Vic., c. 29), on 18th February, 1845:—

"In Ireland the system presents, as I have shown, a remarkable contrast to the state of things in England, displaying as it does a remarkable care for children of tender years. . . . There are instances in Ireland of children beginning to work at six; but," says the Sub-Commissioner, "out of 833 persons visited, only 109 were under 13 years of age." (*Hansard* (1845), p. 641.)

Contrast that state of affairs with the evidence as shown in the "Second Report of Children's Employment Commission, having reference to the Condition of Juvenile

Labourers in various Branches of Industry not affected by the Factory Acts,"* where it was proved that in many trades children began to work at 7, 6, 5, and even 4 years of age, and that the average day's work was from 10 to 12 hours.

Social Legislation.

In the foregoing sketch I have not attempted anything like an exhaustive legal treatise on the Factory Acts, as such would be entirely outside the scope of my subject. I have, however, referred to the Factory System at some length, because it affords a striking illustration of how ruthlessly child-life has been sacrificed in the interests of commercial development; and because, as I shall show later, the same arguments as were then used are now being advanced against urgent present-day reforms, such as Street Trading.

The past quarter of a century has been marked by a very decided advance in the cause of social legislation. The old principle upon which our laws were mainly based, of safeguarding the rights of the strong, has been supplanted by the more benevolent, and I would venture to say, from a national standpoint, the more economic principle of protecting the weak. Under the former, the criminality of the child was regarded, both in kind and degree, with the same severity as that of the adult. Under the latter we have the fruits of principles founded on common humanity and justice, viz., Factory Acts, Mines Regulation Acts, Industrial School Acts, Youthful Offenders Acts, Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, culminating in that great charter of the helpless, the Children's Act, 1908—all of which recognise, to some extent at least, that the child is deserving of protection from the State.

But while the Legislature has done much to improve the legal status of child life, the mode of administering those laws has been most unsatisfactory. One has only to walk through any of our large towns and villages, with an observant eye, to see the ingenious contrivances to override and defeat the intentions of the legislature. The loathsome filth of our slum dwellings, with its inevitable immorality and festering disease, is but the outcome of the insatiable greed of their owners, who, if not altogether with the connivance of the sanitary officers, at least by want of their proper surveillance, defy the provisions of the Public Health Acts. Again, the dreadful scourge of intemperance, too often the result of violations of the

* Parl. Paper, 1843, xiii., xiv., xv.

Licensing Laws, acts and re-acts in a thousandfold manner on child-life, with the result, in many cases, that ere the child attains the age of manhood or womanhood its nervous system has been shattered by the fetid atmosphere of its daily surroundings.

I have no sympathy with either the sentimentalist who avoids facts because they are unpleasant, or the sluggard who hates changes for the public good because they might interfere with his ease. In the great national crisis through which we are passing we are faced with the necessity of men and women to carry on the cause of civilisation, for which the British Empire stands. At such a time, above all others, we must avoid a continued "slaughter of the innocents," as every human life is of national importance. Even the child in rags—a mere social outcast—may be employed in the conquest of the ideal, provided it receives the necessary moral and educational training.

Infant Mortality

The statistics of infant mortality—the importance of which cannot be over-estimated—make one shudder at the loss to the nation of prospective wealth-producers, through causes which, if not wholly, are to a very large extent preventible. Speaking broadly, one baby out of every eleven born in Ireland in 1914 died within the year of its birth; in England one out of every ten; and in Scotland one out of every nine.

But while Ireland as a whole compares favourably with England and Scotland, we must not overlook the fact that Dublin and Belfast compare very unfavourably with other largely populated districts, as may be seen from the following Table:—

Deaths of Infants under Twelve Months to every 1,000 Births.										
	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Dublin	143	146	156	146	141	142	156	140	153	145
Belfast	136	144	136	147	139	143	128	129	144	143
London	130	131	116	113	108	103	128	90	105	104
Liverpool	153	172	144	141	144	140	154	125	131	139
Edinburgh	133	118	127	122	110	111	118	113	101	110
Glasgow	131	131	130	137	133	121	139	124	129	133

In the year 1914 there were 9,352 births in the County Borough of Dublin, and of that number 1,455 children died under the age of 12 months; in the County Borough of Belfast, during the same year, there were 11,149 births, and 1,571 deaths of children under 12 months. In other words, during the past year out of every thirteen children born in Dublin, and two out of every fourteen born in Belfast, died under the age of 12 months.

But dealing with Ireland as a whole, we find the death rate of infants in the "civic" unions—i.e., the 27 towns having a minimum population of 10,000 according to the Census of 1911—is very much greater than in the rural districts.

Deaths of Infants under Three Months to every 1,000
Births registered in Ireland.

Years.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
"Civic" Unions.	64.8	68.8	68.1	65.3	68.6	63.2	70.2	65.1
Remainder of Ireland.	45.6	47.7	44.2	46.7	44.9	43.3	48.2	41.9
Total of Ireland.	53.3	56.2	53.7	54.2	54.4	51.4	57.4	51.4

The Notification of Births Act, 7 Edw. VII., c. 40, is an adoptive Act, or in other words, its operation comes into effect in the area of any local authority which shall by resolution adopt it. In Ireland the Act is in operation only in Dublin and Belfast. In both those areas the death rate of infants under 12 months per 1,000 births was higher in 1914 than in 1905, when the Act was not in existence; and although there was a decrease of such deaths in 1914, as compared with the immediately preceding year, it should not be overlooked that 1913 was marked with one of the highest death rates, not only in Dublin and Belfast, but throughout Ireland, within the past ten years. In saying this, I have no desire to underestimate the importance of the Act, or to minimise the valuable services rendered by both official and voluntary workers, but speaking as a non-medical, I think that the high rate of infant mortality in Dublin lies deeper than any remedy that voluntary societies can supply. Antenatal hygiene must of necessity have a powerful influence on the health of the offspring. The high rate of infant mortality in Dublin, which has the unenviable reputation of having the highest infant death rate of largely popu-

lated centres in the United Kingdom, is the immediate outcome of its filthy slum dwellings, its drunkenness, and its immorality—the last of which is the inevitable result of the combination of overcrowded dwellings and alcohol.

By the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, 1915 (5-6 Geo. V., c. 64), it becomes compulsory in Ireland to give notice of a birth, after 1st September, 1915, in every area, other than a "rural district," so that whereas under the principal Act of 1907, only Dublin and Belfast had adopted its provisions, the notification of births is now compulsory in the 27 civic unions mentioned above.

Closely allied to the question of infant mortality is that of

Baby Farming.

I have already pointed out to this Society the abuses of "one of the most gigantic baby-farming, nursing, boarding-out, and apprenticing institutions that these countries have ever seen," viz., the Foundling Hospital, which was established in Dublin in 1783. (*Journal*, vol. xiii., part xciv., p. 130).

Out of 17,786 children admitted in the six years ended 24th June, 1796, 9,786 died, and 2,847 were unaccounted for; while the total Parliamentary grants during the 20 years ended 31st December, 1829, amounted to £787,682, or an average annual grant of £26,000. Such an extensive prostitution of charity is almost inconceivable at the present moment.

But although the curse of baby-farming is not carried on so extensively at present, there are still many glaring cases of injustice to the children. Only the other day it transpired in the North Dublin Union that three children were entrusted to a woman who was in actual receipt of relief from the Union.

Contrast that action of the Poor Law Authorities with the Report (1905) of a Lady Inspector—one who is well competent to speak with authority on the subject—appointed by the Local Government Board.

"The responsibility which therefore rests on every Board of Guardians by whom pauper children are boarded out is grave, and often, I fear, it is not fully realised. On the judicious placing of the children in suitable homes depends the future of every one of them, whether they are to count as useful citizens or as failures, and perhaps a danger to their neighbours.

"The selection of the foster-parents, the uprightness of their moral character, their capacity for training a child, are matters worthy of the most careful considera-

tion of the Guardians, and in exercising their choice all personal feeling, even of sympathy for individual foster-parents, should give way to the one essential point—that of securing the child's good, moral and physical, present and future. . . . The pity is that oftentimes . . . children are placed in dangerous surroundings and are permitted to be brought up by persons to whom no right-thinking parent would for a moment trust his child. The result is that not only is nothing of good effected, but the same unhappy story of wretchedness, pauperism, and crime is repeated, generation after generation." (1905, Cd. 2655, p. 477).

But while it is the duty of the State, on purely national, if not on higher ethical grounds, to protect infant life against the ruthless hand of death, it is undoubtedly in the interests of the community at large that *all* children should receive such a training and education as would enable them to become, at least, self-dependent. That leads us to the important question of

Dublin Street Trading.

The earliest Act to deal with children trading in the street was the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1889 (f.n. 52 and 53 Vict., c. 44). The provisions of that Act, however, did not apply to the street trader personally, but only imposed penalties on the parent, or other person *in loco parentis*, who caused any child (*i.e.*, a boy under 14 or a girl under 16) to be in any street for the purpose of begging, or getting alms within certain hours therein prescribed, which were enlarged in 1894 to the hours between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., during which time trading by children was prohibited. It was not until 1903 that the juvenile street trader was dealt with personally, and the Employment of Children Act, 1903, provides that a child under 11 shall be prohibited from street trading, while children under 16 are subject to such bye laws regulating street trading as the local authorities may make, subject to confirmation. Dublin was one of the earliest local authorities to frame bye-laws under the Act of 1903, and those bye-laws came into force on 1st January, 1904. As a system of bye-laws they are framed with the utmost regard to the moral and physical welfare of the juvenile traders, and they show an apparent desire to grapple with a social evil. But when we examine the administration of those carefully prepared bye-laws, we find that some of the most important have either been entirely ignored, or never enforced. Sir Frederick Cullinan, C.B., Chairman of the Vice-

Regal Commission of 1902, has publicly described them as "a melancholy failure." For a more minute examination of the failure of those bye-laws, I would refer to a paper read before this Society by Sir J. R. O'Connell, M.A., LL.D., on 28th April, 1911 ("The Juvenile Street Trader and the State." *Journal*, vol. xii., part xci., p. 489).

Let me draw your attention to the Majority Report of the Departmental Committee appointed "To inquire into the operation of the Employment of Children Act, 1903," dated 30th April, 1910.

"The effect of street trading upon the character of those who engage in it is only too frequently disastrous. The youthful street trader is exposed to many of the worst of moral risks: he associates with, and acquires the habits of the frequenters of the kerbstone and the gutter. If a match seller, he is likely to become a beggar; if a newspaper seller, a gambler. The evidence before us was extraordinarily strong as to the extent to which betting prevails among the boy vendors of evening papers. . . . There can be no doubt that large numbers of those who were once street traders drift into vagrancy and crime. Chief Constables testified that street trading is the most fruitful apprenticeship to evil courses. . . . The period between 14 and 16 is a critical time in a boy's life. Street trading provides him with no training: he gets no discipline, he is not occupied the whole of his time: for a few years he makes more money, and makes it more easily than in an office or a workshop, and he is exposed to a variety of actively evil influences. . . . So far as girls are concerned, there must be added to the above evils an unquestionable danger to morals in the narrower sense. The evidence presented to us on this point was unanimous and most emphatic. An occupation entailing such perils is indisputably unfit for girls."

The only apparent reason which has any semblance of justification for the continuance of the present system is the vast amount of poverty in the slums of Irish towns which may be diminished by the earnings of children engaged in street trading. But it is a short-sighted policy, from a national standpoint, which sanctions the use of children to their own detriment for work which can be done by other means. The social conditions which are responsible for the existence of street trading must be recognised as a blot upon our civilisation. The idle, vicious, and drunken parents who utilise their children as wage-earning instruments, utterly regardless of the baneful

effects on the life of the child in after years, are deserving of no leniency, for, as the Right Hon. Herbert Samuel, M.P., said, "Both humanity and policy required that the neglected child should be rescued from the bad home."

A few years ago (March, 1911), Lord Shaftesbury introduced a Bill in the House of Lords which proposed to repeal section 2 of the Children Act, 1903, conferring powers on the local authority to make bye-laws with respect to street trading, and to substitute therefor an absolute statutory prohibition of all street trading by boys under 17 and girls under 18; and it also proposed to substitute the Board of Education for the Secretary of State as the controlling authority; and provided further that sec. 5, subsec. 3, of the Principal Act should be amended by providing that "any person under the age of 16 contravening the provisions of any bye-laws as to street-trading may be sent to a certified Reformatory School."

That measure was dropped because, as in all other great social problems, the vested interests resisted any such attempt at reform. It is the old, old cry of the slave owners who objected to an interference with the sacred (?) rights of property, and of the Manufacturers of Oldham, to which I have referred, who wished to employ children of 11 for 69 hours a week, on the grounds that it was "absolutely necessary to the carrying on of the Cotton Trade." But slavery was abolished on the grounds of humanity, and the cruelty of employing children of 11 for 69 hours a week has long since been prohibited. The claims of the juvenile street trader, as set out in Lord Shaftesbury's Bill, are not only based on humanity, but the interests of the community demand that children should be protected against a system which is "the most fruitful apprenticeship of evil courses."

Take again the manner in which the Education Acts, as affected by the Factory Acts, are administered in the

Belfast Schools.

In the 72nd Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, for the year 1905, there appears the following (Cd. 3154):—

"We were informed that the overcrowded state of some of the schools in Belfast is so aggravated as seriously to endanger the health of the pupils and teachers," p. 16.

"The school buildings on the County Down side of the Lagan are the most unsatisfactory of all. In this quarter of the city, known as Ballymacarrett, the popu-

lation has increased rapidly within recent years, with the result that most of the schools are congested. The condition of affairs in some of these schools is almost incredible."

"Two days ago, for example, I visited a school and found 401 present, though there is proper accommodation for only 209."

"The average daily attendance at this school was 329 for the year ended 31st December, 1904. But much worse remains to be told. I found 78 infants in a room 19 feet by 9½ feet; 64 First Standard pupils in a room 14 feet by 9½ feet (with one window admitting of being opened), and 33 First Standard pupils in a room of 13½ feet by 10 feet. Surely 'disgraceful' is at best a mild adjective to describe this condition of things, which loudly calls for attention."

"The congestion is so great that lavatories, cloak-rooms, halls and passages are utilised for class purposes," p. 16.

Six years later the Commissioners report for the year 1910 as follows (Appendix to 77th Report—Cd. 6042):—

"The provision made for the education of the children in Ballymacarrett is exceedingly scant and inadequate . . . the schools are too few, and many of them are overcrowded, so that children are repeatedly refused admission to them, and are forced to grow up in idleness, and destitute of the merest elements of learning. . . . This deficiency is of long standing, and is growing with the growth of Ballymacarrett; and in the meantime one sees no prospect of any remedy. . . . There is something amiss with a place which abounds in industrial works, and maintains a teeming population, but is unwilling or reluctant to provide the means of giving every child within its bounds the opportunity of learning to read and write," p. 56.

In the Appendix to 78th Report, for 1911 (Cd. 7061), there appears:—

"Almost 40 per cent. of the city schools have no playground; 16 per cent. or 17 per cent. have fair playground accommodation: the others have good playgrounds," p. 100.

"The average on the rolls of the city schools for 1911 was 64,654, the average attendance being 49,710. This makes a difference of about 15,000. . . I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that there are, on an average, at least 17,000 children of school-age who are absent each day. . . . One of the reasons advanced in favour

of the 'half-time' system is that its abolition would reduce many families to destitution," p. 102.

The last Report published, for the year 1913, says of Belfast (2) Circuit:—

"It may be of interest to give details of a few of the worst schools. One of them has accommodation for 80. Whereas the average attendance was 100. There are two classrooms, each 11 ft. 8 in. by 9 ft. 3 in., there being only one window in each. In one of these rooms I found 29 pupils, and in the other 33. Neither of the rooms is heated, and during very cold weather in last winter the teacher had to put all the pupils into the schoolroom, which is heated only by a gas stove. Rarely have I seen such dirty floors and galleries as I saw in this school. In fact, they were swept only on alternate days. Another school has accommodation for 70, but 104 were present. I found 43 pupils in a room 12 ft. 11 in. by 11 ft. 9 in. This room has a sloping corrugated iron roof, one end of which is only a few feet from the floor. I make bold to say that a County Down farmer would not think it too good for a fowl house. There is no means of heating it, and on visiting it one very cold day I advised the teachers to keep out of it. There is a somewhat similar room in the same building, but it was supposed to be heated by an oil lamp which mocked all heat," p. 62.

"In another school there are two small rooms, one of which was heated by an oil stove. The other had no heating apparatus, but the teacher informed me that they got heat through the wall of an adjoining dwelling-house," p. 63. (Cd. 7966.)

Day Industrial Schools.

Day Industrial Schools are defined by section 16 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876* (f.n.), to be schools "in which industrial training, elementary education, and one or more meals a day, but not lodging, are provided for the children." The Children Act of 1908 (f.n., 8 Edw. VII., c. 67), gave, for the first time, facilities for the creation of such schools in Ireland, by giving to the State and the local authorities power to contribute to the maintenance of children in such schools. In the year 1909 the Philanthropic Reform Association approached the Dublin Corporation with a view to the establishment of such schools, and it was not until five years later (1914) that the Corporation passed a resolution adopting the Report of the

* 39 & 40 Vic., c. 79.

Estates and Finance Committee, which recommended the payment of 2s. per head per week towards the maintenance of children in Day Industrial Schools. Unfortunately, when an ardent expectation was entertained that this much desired and worthy object was about to be consummated, those convulsions of Europe took place which diverted public attention to the pursuits of arms and of war.

Although the time may be inopportune to press the matter further at present, the object of these schools should not be lost sight of. Mr. T. Humphreys, Governor of the Day Industrial School, Drury Lane, London, says:—

“The children sent to a Day Industrial School are mainly the neglected, the dirty, the truant and disorderly—children for whom the ordinary school has no attraction, whose parents do not try, or try in vain, to make them attend, and who when they do attend are generally extremely backward and inattentive, and and whilst keeping back the class in which they are, do not themselves make any progress, nor do they fit at all into the school system. . . . The education and training received at a Day Industrial School is adapted and elaborated so as to reach the dull and backward, the children below the average, the children different from the average, and every sort of child in danger of being left out of, or wriggling through the net of any ordinary scheme of education.”

Juvenile Crime.

It will not be necessary for me to enter on this branch of the question, after the very able and exhaustive Presidential Address which was delivered to this Society by Lord Chief Justice Cherry on 24th January, 1911 (f.n., “Juvenile Crime and its Prevention.” *Journal*, vol. 26, part xci., p. 435). I shall, however, take the liberty of making one quotation from that Address, which, coming from so distinguished a jurist, cannot be too often repeated:—

“I am firmly convinced that if we could get rid of juvenile crime, as by a proper treatment of the criminals I am equally convinced we can do, we should rid society once and for all of that hideous pest, the habitual criminal.”

Let us hope that the eminent writer of these words may live to see their full realisation.

Conclusion.

May we not safely ask ourselves with Tennyson :

“ Is it well that, while we range with science, glorying in
the time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city
slime?”

To such a question there can be only one answer: “ It is not well.” How then are we to rectify this existing evil? Not, I believe, by fresh legislation, but by a more rigid enforcement and observance of the laws that are in force. It is now over half a century since Victor Hugo wrote in “ *Les Misérables* ”: “ *Tous les crimes de l’homme commencent au vagabondage de l’enfant.*” To-day our streets are filled with vagrant and beggar children who openly set at defiance the laws that have been enacted for the protection of society from these pests. If those charitably inclined people who encourage begging in the streets, by giving an odd copper to a poorly clad child, would only realise the truth contained in Victor Hugo’s words, much mischief might be averted. The charitable institutions in which our city abounds have ample means of ascertaining the truly deserving poor, and too often the street beggar does not come within that category. Money given indiscriminately in the streets would be much better devoted to the service of the poor if handed over to the Children’s Clothing Society (Police Aided), or the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, both of which, I am glad to say, are conducted on strictly non-sectarian lines.

To assume the mantle of the prophet is at all times dangerous, and I have no desire to incur such risk. But there is one outstanding fact of the present war which gives us a ray of hope for the future, and that is the noble and self-sacrificing part which is being played by women. Let us take courage, and give women a more important part in the administration of the laws relating to child life, and it will rebound with untold blessings on the community. By such a course, I believe, we shall minimise the manufacture of criminals and paupers and direct the children of the slums into channels of usefulness, and thereby add very considerably to the nation’s wealth.