

Manasseh, Ephraim, and Ephraim, Manasseh, and they shall fall together on Judah. In all this His anger hath not been turned away, even yet is His hand stretched out.”¹

J. J. LIAS.

(To be continued.)



ART. VI.—REPORT ON PHYSICAL DETERIORATION
(continued).

THE last section of the Report which we considered in our previous article was that dealing with the “Effects of Alcoholism.”

The next section (No. IV.) examines the assertion that there has been, and still continues, a “Depletion of Rural Districts by the Exodus of the Best Types”; in connection with this is considered the further assertion that “the evil is aggravated . . . by the drifting into the country of the debilitated town population, which is crowded out by the inrush of more vigorous elements.”

The country districts, from the physical point of view, undoubtedly produce the best specimens of the race. What the effect of town life is upon the mental powers seems at present to be a question upon which more evidence is needed before any opinion can be given.

The strong are attracted to the towns by higher wages; and it is found that in those occupations for which physical strength is a necessity the majority of the workers are country-bred, and have grown to maturity in farm or outdoor work. This applies to “navvies, pig-iron carriers in blast-furnaces, bleaching-powder packers, cement workers,” etc. A further proof of this fact was stated by one witness thus: “Thirty years ago it was the commonest thing for a farm labourer to carry 2½ cwt. of corn up a ladder; now you very seldom see it.”

It is to procure reliable data as to what extent this physical deterioration is proceeding that the committee so strongly urge the institution of an anthropometric survey.

But, whatever be the rate or extent of this deterioration, there cannot be any controversy as to the expediency of

¹ Precisely the same principles may be applied to the more contracted conflicts of each separate portion of the British Empire, and of each class in each portion.

NOTE.—The “critical note” on pp. 35, 36 of the October No. of the CHURCHMAN should have been inserted here. It refers to chap. ix. 8-21.

arresting it. For, could the influx of strong, healthy men into the towns be stayed, the urban populations would then of necessity be driven to produce conditions of life under which they could, within their own limits, bring up a population capable of doing the hardest work. But how to prevent the present influx is, so far, an unsolved problem. Most of the remedies suggested are of the nature of counter attractions. They may come under the head of efforts to increase an appreciation of country life. Among these, the giving to men the opportunity of acquiring small holdings, and lending them money to build houses upon them—a method which has been tried with success by the Worcestershire County Council—may be mentioned. Another consists in making it easier to obtain allotments.

It was also suggested that something might be done through the children in the schools; that they might be taught to take an interest, not only in books, but in the life of the fields; that they might be taught gardening; how to keep bees; the making of cheese and the management of a dairy, and the possible improvements in these; and that we might instil into them the taste for an active life and the delight in physical energy (Article 195).

The difficulty of obtaining cottages is another cause of the rural exodus. Landlords assert that it is impossible to comply with building by-laws and erect cottages, except at a considerable loss. Sanitary authorities demand the repair of insanitary dwellings, and it is often found to be cheaper to remove these than to repair them.

On the other hand, the following statement of Mr. Rowntree deserves attention. In order to get people to move out of the town, "we are building cottages a mile from the city boundary, each cottage having a garden; and we find that we can build an artistic cottage, thoroughly well-built of the best materials, with a large living-room and scullery, bath, three good bedrooms, and a garden, to let at 4s. 6d. a week, the tenant paying rates, to show 4 per cent. on capital" (Article 198).

It is not stated, but we presume that this 4 per cent. includes the value of the land. Yet, even if this be so, cottage property, which only shows such a return when let, can hardly be regarded as a remunerative investment, and we fear that 4s. 6d. a week, plus rates, is more than most agricultural labourers could afford to pay.

At the close of this section reference is made to the object of the "Garden City Association," which, though not designed with a view to arresting physical deterioration, may yet, if successful, have a considerable effect in that direction. We

must not stay to consider the scheme at length, for full information can be found about it elsewhere. Briefly, its objects are; "to induce manufacturers to remove their plant and their workpeople into newly-developed areas in the country, where every hygienic safeguard will be applied to the aggregation of an industrial population, and that aggregation so controlled within due limits that rural conditions may be permanently associated with urban life" (Article 200).

Section V. of the Report examines the "Alleged Tendency of superior stocks in all classes towards a diminished rate of Reproduction" as one of the possible causes of physical deterioration.

That the birth-rate is diminishing, if in varying degrees, in all countries of Western Europe appears to be an established fact. However much this fact may be deplored, there are—at any rate, in this country—two compensating considerations: (1) The average age at which people marry is higher; (2) there is a diminution in the number of illegitimate children. Both these movements should tend rather to the improvement than to the deterioration of the next generation.

As an example of the "disagreement of doctors," it would be difficult to beat the evidence adduced in this section.

There is a long quotation from Professor Karl Pearson, who laments "a lack of leaders of the highest intelligence" in all professions and in all classes of society. He believes that "the mentally better stock of the nation is not reproducing itself at the same rate as it did of old; . . . we stand at the commencement of an epoch which will be marked by a great dearth of ability."

On the other hand, Professor Cunningham, who seems to give very good reasons for his view, thinks "this statement a pure assumption." Dr. Arthur Shadwell does not think "there is ground for the belief that the more capable among the working classes are not reproducing themselves at least in the same proportion as those less capable of bringing into existence persons physically fit."

A Mr. Gray, who is described as a "capable witness," put forward another aspect of the question. In urban centres two movements seem to be at work contemporaneously: (1) A decreasing *birth-rate* among the higher classes; (2) a decreasing *death-rate* among the very poor. This latter may be due to improved sanitary organization, also probably to improved facilities—say through the Poor Law—of obtaining adequate medical attention. In forming any conclusion both these movements should be remembered.

The conclusion of the Committee on the whole of the evidence was that a judgment upon the subject cannot be

pronounced until, by a proper census, adequate information is obtained.

In Section VI. we pass to the subject of "Food." Here there was at once a strong consensus of opinion as to the effect of improper or insufficient food in the production of physical deterioration. As the "right feeding of the young" is dealt with at length in Section VII., food is here considered "in relation to the people at large."

It is most difficult to condense the contents of this section, every word of which should be pondered by those who visit among the poor. Strong evidence was given that "a large proportion of British housewives are tainted with incurable laziness and distaste for the obligations of domestic life" (Article 217); also to the growing method of resorting to various kinds of tinned foods, also to changes wrought by alteration in the relative cost of certain articles—*i.e.*, the cheapening of tea. More than one medical witness spoke of the widespread use of tea and white bread and jam, instead of oatmeal and milk.

It is not always that the amount of food is insufficient; it is frequently that there is a want of *proportion* in the elements of the diet necessary to produce energy for work. And "where the amount available for expenditure upon food is limited, it is of special importance to procure the proper materials, and it is in selection that the defects of English habits come out so prominently."

Witness after witness drew attention to the evil results of the tea-drinking habit, which seems to be growing among the poor, and it was stated that "a very large proportion of the young men rejected for the Army had been refused on account of ailments brought about by this practice."

Much, of course, depends upon the nature of the mixture which is called "tea," whose constituents and method of preparation are described as "boiling water poured on too large an amount of poor tea-leaves, and left to stand until the tea—a dark and nasty mixture—has become almost a stew." This mixture, which by another witness was described as "tea-poison," is drunk to the extent of three or four pints in the course of the day.

Evidence was also given to show that even among those with ample resources there is a very general disinclination to spend sufficient money on food, this being the case especially with women. Money that should be spent upon food is expended in personal adornment, on pleasure—*i.e.*, different forms of cheap excitement—upon betting and gambling, and upon drink.

As a remedy for these conditions there is evident need of

“training of a socially educative character among girls and young women.” Some teaching is no doubt given in the elementary schools, but it was regarded as of little value—first because it was often unpractical, and secondly, because of the early age at which children leave school. It was suggested that, at least, something might be done at Mothers’ Meetings, and by lectures of a very simple and practical kind. Another suggestion made was that continuation classes for domestic instruction might be organized, at which attendance should be made compulsory for girls—other than domestic servants—who have left school, say on two evenings in the week. “The teaching of cookery should be directed to the selection, economy, and preparation of the material best suited to the needs of the poorer classes, and care should be taken to use only such apparatus and utensils as under favourable circumstances are likely to be found in the houses of the poor.” The instruction should have direct reference to the wants of the children concerned, and should vary for urban and rural schools. “The work should be thoroughly practical, and, where possible, the material cooked should be eaten in the presence of those who have cooked it.”

The final article of this section states that the Committee believe that if these methods are pursued, and if public opinion can be enlisted in their favour, in a few years much might be done “to reduce evils which are not only a standing reproach to certain classes of the nation, but constitute a serious menace to its general well-being.”

Section VII., upon “Conditions attending the Life of the Juvenile Population,” is by far the longest in the whole Report, filling thirty-two pages out of eighty-four. It is divided into eight subsections, some of which are again subdivided.

The Committee evidently felt, like so many social workers, that too much importance cannot be laid upon the conditions of the child-life of the nation, for upon the up-bringing and education of the children the future welfare of the nation depends. Hence they have made the most careful examination into these conditions, and especially in those quarters where they might be suspected of most needing improvement. To all classes of women-workers among the poor this section should prove of great value. To show how comprehensive is its survey of child-life, I will notice very briefly the various subsections, and also the subjects treated in those which are further subdivided.

Subsection I. deals with “Infant Mortality.” This part of the Report is very painful reading, and unfortunately this terrible waste of life does not, with all our increase of knowledge and improvement of sanitation, appear to be decreasing.

In certain parts of London and in some of the Lancashire towns the infant death-rate exceeds 200 per 1,000. This terrible death-rate is by no means "necessarily connected with poverty." Ignorance and carelessness are apparently much more potent factors. Amendment of the Registration Laws seems to be needed, and the Committee felt that the subject of "Infant Insurance" demanded very careful consideration.

Subsection II. deals with "Hereditary Taint." This subject is very briefly treated, for there seemed to be little agreement, even among experts, as to the part played by this in physical degeneration.

In Subsection III. we pass to the "Employment of Mothers late in Pregnancy, and too soon after Childbirth." Here there was at once agreement that "the factory employment of mothers has a bad effect on the offspring, both direct and indirect." The Lancashire towns of Blackburn, Preston, and Burnley, seem to be the worst offenders; in each of these the married or widowed among the women factory-workers exceed 30 per cent. of the whole. The reasons given for their employment are various. Some of the reasons seem justifiable—*e.g.*, death of husband, or inadequacy of his wage; for other reasons it seems difficult to find justification—*e.g.*, "preference for factory over domestic work, money to spend on excursions, holidays, and amusements." The conclusion to which the Committee came may be stated thus: they felt that while the present condition of things must be condemned, on the other hand, further prohibitive legislation, unless most carefully arranged, might entail very considerable hardship; indeed, might even lead to a serious increase of moral danger.

Section IV. is upon "Decrease in Breast-Feeding—Defective Milk-Supply." "A decrease at the present time in the first is generally admitted to be the case in all classes of society—at any rate, in the urban districts . . . with the poor this is generally due to inability. In some cases, however, it is due to unwillingness, because it interferes with their going to work." As to the causes of this inability, "the medical profession are in ignorance." Under these circumstances the question of the milk-supply naturally becomes of the greatest importance. To an examination of present conditions, and to the suggestion of possible improvements of this, twelve long articles are devoted. But we must not stay to examine these now.

Section V. deals with "Parental Ignorance and Neglect." As the title indicates, we have to deal with two factors, the first being want of knowledge on the part of parents, the second being indifference, which sometimes amounts to posi-

tive callousness. It is not always easy to say in any particular set of circumstances which of these two factors had been the most productive. The Report speaks of the many deaths among small children from "overlying"; but where bed-clothes are scarce, and there are few wraps, a child may be put to sleep with the parents to secure for it warmth, and in ignorance of the danger of suffocation. Another matter on which there is much ignorance is the need of sufficient ventilation in both living and sleeping-rooms for health. Again, many of the mothers among the poor have little or no knowledge of the symptoms of "slighter ailments," or how to take those precautionary steps which prevent slight ailments developing into serious ones.

After Section VI., which deals with "Feeding wrong in Time, in Kind, and Proportion," we come to a section which suggests certain "Remedial Measures for the above Adverse Conditions." Among these the highest praise is bestowed upon the methods employed by the "Manchester and Salford Ladies' Public Health Society"—a society which has now been in existence for twenty-five years, and whose object is "the discovery of all those conditions that are adverse to public health, and especially the bringing within the knowledge of the mothers among the poor such information as will enable them to do their duty by their children. A brief account of the work of this society will be found in paragraph 297.

In Section VII. we pass from the consideration of infant life to that of the "School System." This section is divided into two main divisions, the first being upon the "Medical Inspection of School-Children." As to the value of a regular and systematic inspection of the health of the children in the elementary schools, there can hardly be two opinions. It must prove of value to the children themselves, as well as to the authorities and the nation generally, because it will supply these latter with an amount of knowledge which cannot fail to be of great use. The second sub-section deals with a highly controversial subject—the "Feeding of School Children." A *résumé* of the evidence obtained from the various witnesses examined is given under three heads: (a) "The Extent to which Underfeeding Prevails at Present"; (b) "Existing Voluntary Methods of Providing Food"; (c) "Proposals in Regard to the more Systematic Feeding of School-Children."

(a) "The Extent of Underfeeding." That a very large number of the children attending the schools in the poorest parts of our large towns are habitually underfed seems to be proved. The estimate submitted to the Committee put the

number for London at 122,000, or 16 per cent. of the elementary school population. The estimate for Manchester was 15 per cent. By other witnesses the first of these figures was considered far too high. But, even if 20,000 children in London—perhaps the lowest possible estimate—are sent to school underfed, the case is sufficiently serious. The question arises, What is the cause of this underfeeding? And more than one witness attributed it, at least partially, to “laziness and neglect of the parents.”

(b) “Existing Voluntary Methods of Providing Food.” Several of these are described in some detail. In certain cases the meals are provided absolutely free; in others by means of tickets given beforehand; in some cases there is at least an attempt at discrimination between the children; in others all are charged a very small sum. A satisfactory means or method of discrimination seems to be the chief difficulty, so much investigation being needed before any satisfactory decision can be made.

(c) “Proposals in Regard to the more Systematic Feeding of School-Children.” It is here that we find ourselves plunged into the midst of controversy. On the one hand, as the Report says, “there was a general consensus of opinion that the time has come when the State should realize the necessity of insuring¹ adequate nourishment to children in attendance at school; it was said to be the height of cruelty to subject half-starved children to the processes of education, besides being a short-sighted policy, in that the progress of such children is inadequate and disappointing, etc.” (Art. 348). On the other hand, those who have wide experience of relief-work of any kind know, not only the dangers, but the positively inevitable evils to character which ensue from relieving people from responsibilities which Nature intends them to discharge. And the effects of removing these responsibilities are widespread; to quote the words of one witness: “It weakens the sense of self-respect and self-reliance both of parent and child.”

The problem before us at the present time is, then, to insure that the children are fed, without taking the responsibility from the parents. How is this problem to be solved? When one witness advocates “the judicious feeding of school-children so as not to pauperize parents,” we fully agree, but we ask, How are you going to do it? When another witness advises that “parents should be prosecuted for neglect,” we feel we have at least a practical suggestion, and we fully

¹ The Committee did not in any way commit themselves to an opinion as to *how* this adequate nourishment was to be secured.

endorse both this and his further opinion that "a few prosecutions would have a salutary effect." About one thing we feel perfectly certain: that the money which the lowest classes on the aggregate spend upon drink would many times over feed their children. And from practical experience we are forced to believe that by far the largest proportion of the money which is expended upon the relief of these classes ultimately, however indirectly, finds its way into the till of the publican. We only hope that in this matter of the feeding of the school-children no step will be taken which tends still further to weaken the national character.

The last subsection treating of child-life deals with "The Risks of Contamination during Adolescence." This is a subject which should come home with peculiar force to the clergy and to all who are engaged in Sunday-school work. We must not enter into this subsection, which treats separately of the dangers (a) to girls and (b) to boys, and which also describes the various means suggested by different witnesses to overcome these. We can only commend this part of the Report to the careful study of our readers. But the opening sentences of the subsection strike us as so eminently wise that we cannot refrain from quoting them. "The Committee are impressed with the conviction that the period of adolescence is responsible for much waste of human material and for the entrance upon maturity of permanently damaged and ineffective persons of both sexes. The plasticity of the physical organization, the power it possesses of yielding rapidly towards degenerative or recuperative influence, appears to terminate at eighteen, and the records of the years preceding that age are, in the great majority of cases, decisive for self-improvement or the reverse. Unfortunately, it is a period of which too little account is taken. With the classes under consideration, education in the ordinary sense of the word is over just when, in its full significance, it becomes most necessary. Parental direction is almost entirely absent, and in lieu of it very little supervision is exercised in any other quarter over physical or moral development."

We have exhausted the space at our disposal, and that without saying a word upon Section VII., which deals with "Special Subjects"—*e.g.*, "Eyes and Ears," "Insanity," "Vagrancy and Defective Children," or upon Part III., which contains the valuable "Summary of Recommendations," or upon the six most valuable Appendices, among which will be found an excellent *memorandum* by Mr. C. S. Loch, "Relating to Some Recent Investigations as to the Number of 'Poor' in the Community."

We think, however, we have shown, as was stated at the

last meeting of the British Association, that we have here one of the most valuable reports which for a long time has been presented to the nation. It should be most carefully studied by all who have at heart the welfare of the poor, and especially by those who are called to work among them.

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.

ART. VII.—A PRINCE OF MYSTIFIERS.

“ **A** MIDDLE-AGED spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion and dark-coloured brown hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes and a large mole near his mouth.”

So runs the description of Daniel Defoe in the *Gazette* of January 10, 1702. His pamphlet, “The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,” had been adjudged a libel on the High Church party, and a reward was offered for his apprehension, with the result that he was not only pilloried, but imprisoned in Newgate for the best part of two years.

But Defoe, the political writer, the party hack, the hired satirist, has little interest for the reader of to-day, and if these were all his claims to remembrance the wave of oblivion which has engulfed so many of his tribe would have rolled over him long ago. The “middle-aged spare man” with the “hooked nose” and the “sharp chin” was, however, far more than this: he was a prince of mystifiers, and in this title lies his true distinction. His special power lay in producing fiction which his readers took for fact. Lord Chatham, we are told, believed in the authenticity of the “Memoirs of a Cavalier”; the “History of the Plague” was considered by the medical profession a highly valuable account of the ravages of that disease; and Gildon, a contemporary writer, says that every old woman bought “Robinson Crusoe” and left it as a legacy with the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” the “Practice of Piety,” and “God’s Revenge against Murder.”

But the best illustration of his gift for what has been called “forging the handwriting of Nature” is the short tale known as “The Apparition of Mrs. Veal,” a tale which his biographer, Mr. William Lee, designates as “perhaps the most perfect fiction of its kind that ever was written.”

A curious but strongly-marked feature of the school of iconoclastic criticism is its assumption that a fact, historical or literary, as the case may be, is deprived of all claim upon our interest by the disproving of the statements that have grown up around it. Mr. Minto, in his “Life of Defoe,” appends the