

ASPECTS
OF THE
SOCIAL PROBLEM

BY VARIOUS WRITERS

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III

THE CHILDREN OF WORKING LONDON

By H. DENDY

ONE of the most serious social problems of the day is that presented by the rapid increase of large towns, more especially of London; and there is a tendency to regard this increase as wholly undesirable, and to some extent unnatural. When we are told that the population of London increases every year by 50,000, or in more picturesque and sensational language, that a fair sized town is added annually to the metropolis, a lively imagination conjures up the picture of an army of able-bodied men and women trooping up from the country-side or from abroad, to compete with the unfortunate Londoner. We are a little apt, I think, to lose sight of the fact that by far the greater part of this annual increase consists of little Londoners who have at least as good a right as their parents to their heritage—such as it is—of bricks and mortar, and whose so-called “competition for labour” cannot but be regarded as natural and desirable. Dr. Longstaff, in his *Studies in Statistics*, estimates the extent to which Greater London grows on the one hand by “natural increase,” on the other by the “balance of migration,” and the ratio is as $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 4,—that is to say, nearly two-thirds of the annual increase consists of London-born children. This being so, it is evident that only a comparatively small part of the problem is touched by any considerations as to the restriction of immigration from the country. A far more

serious question presents itself in the infantine army, which is advancing upon us in what remains of this century, and in the physical and mental condition of its members. We are told, for instance, that new hospitals will be needed for at least 6000, many of whom will be permanently crippled; institutions for nearly 1000 blind and deaf and dumb; prisons for 7000 criminals; and workhouses for 48,000 paupers; while of those who remain to take the field many will be feeble-minded and most feeble-bodied.

From considerations such as these the question which forces itself perhaps most frequently upon those who live in working London is this: Is it possible for children to grow up healthy and strong—mentally and physically—in large towns, or is it as inevitable as it is true that the race degenerates with town life until the third generation dies out from mere want of vitality? It is with this question before us that I propose to examine some of the conditions of child-life as they actually exist, and to consider how far they admit of actual improvement.

The most obvious and easily grasped of these conditions is, of course, school; but important as its influence is, this must still remain a mere incident in life as compared with the home. The child learns his manners and refinements at school; his habits and character are those of his home.

Home-life in working London is difficult to see. Sometimes one almost doubts whether there is anything beyond the busy passing up and down the streets, the hasty meal snatched between intervals of school or work, and for the mother the weary alternation between wash-tub and scrubbing-brush. But this is the impression of the outsider who confines his investigations to the main thoroughfares, or makes official visits during the business hours of the business day. One way for such a one to get a glimpse of the real life behind is by a study of back-gardens, such as are fortunately still to be found in many parts of London. Here human nature displays itself naturally and off its guard. Although the gardens (yards would be a better

name) are necessarily surrounded by houses, each with its six or eight windows pointed directly upon them, yet there is a sort of tacit understanding by virtue of which family life goes on as freely and easily as in the most perfect seclusion. There is not necessarily any ignoring of what takes place, but it is understood that you are beyond the sphere of criticism, and may plant sunflowers, and shoot sparrows, and practise boxing on a Sunday without any one having the right to "pass remarks."

I am fortunate in commanding the survey of some five or six of these gardens—sooty, dingy strips they are, but capable of affording an immense variety of interest to the owners and their neighbours. In four of these there are families of children who lend themselves fairly well as specimens of different types. No. 1 is the highest in the scale; it consists of four or five little boys, so like each other that the number is uncertain; they are as sturdy, well-cared-for little fellows as one would wish to see. The father is a policeman, with an interest in animal, as well as human nature, and his strip of garden is quite full of natural history. Every spring a brood of young ducklings appears, and as they gradually leave the scene they are replaced by pigeons; about a third of the ground is devoted to a permanent staff of cocks and hens, just beyond the reach of a dog whose chain allows him to command another considerable portion of the estate. I believe, but am not sure, that the lean-to at the end contains rabbits or guinea-pigs or some such small deer, and the daily process of tending and feeding this little kingdom is gone through with the greatest regularity and care by father and sons in company. Covered up in quaint little blouses which are discarded outside the front door, these little fellows have all the appearance, and many of the interests of country children, and in watching their merry natural life one feels encouraged to hope that in judicious hands many of the evils of the town may be averted.

Family No. 2 consists entirely of girls, aged from four to fourteen; it is distinctly lower in the scale of comfort than No. 1, although the mothers are on speaking

terms and confide the histories of their children's accidents and ailments over the low dividing wall. There is a want of the phlegmatic calm which distinguishes the policeman (I believe he is a Scotchman), and gives a tone of well-being to his family; the mother is worn and anxious-looking, the father is said to be going up in the world, but he drinks heavily, and since falling off the top of an omnibus, is wont to come home in a hansom. Discipline is enforced by loud commands and hasty slaps; the children are oftener in the streets than are their little neighbours; and the eldest girl has already caught something of the noisy laugh and reckless romping ways which are so characteristic of London girls. But there is still much that is natural and healthy about the life of this family; they have proper children's games in their garden, dolls' tea-parties, shops, and all the wholesome make-believe of child-life, and last autumn, after the delicate one had been ill, the whole batch was seen crowding into a cab on their way to a fortnight at the seaside.

No. 3 represents the pitiful class of invalid children. Until a few months ago she was the brightest little mite in London, brimful of life and merriment and spirits. Such children, when well cared for, seem to concentrate into their few short years of health the energy and vivacity of a lifetime. They are prematurely quick-witted, inexhaustible in spirits, with the keenest interest in all that goes on around them, and, until stricken down by illness, the light and life of the home. But they are children of the third generation, their parents die young of consumption, and if they do not succumb to the ailments incident to childhood, they emerge from them crippled and maimed for life.

No. 3 has been brought up on exclusive principles; a little guarded intercourse is permitted with the girls of No. 2, but with family No. 4 she is not allowed to "associate" at all, and if found exchanging childish confidences on the subject of cats or dolls over the wall, is hustled away to the seclusion of the back-kitchen. For the children of No. 4 are very low down in the scale;

they are not householders but occupy a back attic, and it is only on sufferance that the little brother and sister are allowed in the garden at all. To them it is a place of punishment rather than of recreation ; they are banished thither, or into the street, whenever washing-day or other family catastrophes render their presence in the little room undesirable. They are ugly, half-starved, cross little things, whose only idea of play is to drop something over the wall for the sake of having it handed back, unaccompanied by a blow or a harsh word. Their future is easily read ; in a few years time the girl's poor, plain little face will be hidden under the big hat and drooping feathers of the factory hand, and the boy will be running wild in the streets, qualifying for reformatory or prison. And yet their life might be almost as good as that of No. 1 ; they live in exactly the same surroundings, and might go to the same school ; it is only a wholesome home atmosphere which is wanting.

It was first suggested to me by watching family No. 1 that one of the greatest drawbacks of a town education is its remoteness from Nature. I am not referring now so much to the truism that it is desirable for children to have plenty of fresh air and country food, as to the effect upon mental and moral development of being born and bred in a town. Perhaps we can hardly realise what a narrowness of view this means for our little Londoners. For them the normal condition of a plant is to be in a pot, of a bird to be in a cage, of any animal but a horse or dog to be hanging up an ugly corpse in a butcher's shop. And it is not only that in this way they see Nature as something poor and ugly ; they cannot see it in any other aspect than as subservient to human wants. There is no possibility of that disinterested outlook upon the world which is the root of all higher life. The country boy goes birds'-nesting, and catches animals, and turns all things to his own profit and amusement ; but not even his egotism can fail to see that Nature has a meaning which is quite indifferent to his interests, and so presently he develops into the artist or man of science. If the town boy has any liking for live things

he haunts the bird-fanciers' shops, and all which that leads to is pigeon-shooting and rat-catching.

Disinterested interest—that must be the keynote of all healthy life, and it is so difficult to get for children in a town life, where everything they see is framed and fashioned unmistakably for man alone. In the country human nature sinks to its proper insignificance, and preserves its true proportions; in the town its importance is exaggerated out of all proportion, and it becomes the grotesque and even hideous caricature which seems to develop inevitably under the influences of town life, and which is rarely found in the country.

This, then, should be one of the points to aim at in the education of town children; to get them back to a proper reverence for Nature—reverence for the lower as well as for the higher forms of life, for degradation of the former is always followed by degradation of the latter. Much can be done in this way by means of books, museums, and public gardens; but all these are tainted by the same leaven of artificiality, and subordination to the little uses of mankind. Perhaps the biggest step in the right direction has been taken by the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and if it would last just long enough to establish a habit, and then die quietly out before it has established a claim, it might figure in social history as the initiator of a great social reformation.

Where there is a true home life this difficulty may be to a large extent got over, and a good home influence may partly compensate for the moral training which only country life can fully give. How far the London school life works in the right direction it is difficult to say; for the lowest class of children its value is quite inestimable; but this value consists less in the actual information imparted than in the discipline and order which is enforced. But when the children are of a better class, getting their moral education at home, and looking to school for their mental development, the question takes a rather different shape. If one could look upon the code as final, and upon education as a given quantity accurately contained within its limits, then our Board Schools would be almost perfect in this

way. Even as it is, the results which they achieve are really wonderful, and justify the expectation of great things when the material upon which we have to work is better understood. Take, for instance, the vexed question of technical training. There is in our school-children an immense amount of aptitude simply running to waste for want of proper development. These are children of generations of woodcarvers, weavers, flower-makers, and engravers who have inherited a fineness of touch which none of the present training given in a Board School can improve. They are splendid material for real teaching, and only need to have their eyes opened to true art to turn out first-rate work ; but then we must have artists, or at least some one who knows what art is, to teach them. It is the same with musical talent ; here, again, the material is excellent ; their voices are good, and they are far more apt to understand and learn than children of the same age and social rank in the country.

The point which I want to bring out about these better-class children—the children of the artisan—is, that so far as concerns them, we are reversing the process of using a razor to chop wood with ; we are trying to fashion very delicate and valuable material with very clumsy tools, and there is a great future for the upper working classes when they have learned how to develop properly the intellectual capacities of their children.

How does it stand with these children as regards their chances of health and physical development? They have many difficulties to contend with in a town. Much stress is often laid upon the dangers they are exposed to in coming into close contact with the lowest class of children in the schools. So far as they do actually come into contact with them, this is a serious matter, and makes one feel inclined to wonder at the almost complete extinction of private schools. But the explanation may be found in the natural classification which goes on amongst the schools of a neighbourhood, and which is perfectly well recognised by both teachers and parents. Of the three schools which I know best, and which lie almost within a stone's throw

of each other, the first contains hardly any but picked children—the best of the artisan class; the second has children of a much rougher description, but still fairly respectable; while the third is called by its teachers the “sink of Hoxton.” The neighbourhood is to all intents and purposes the same, but the one which was built last, and with all the newest improvements, has got a good name. There are always far more applications than can be entertained. The teachers are able to choose, and they naturally select those who will keep up the good name of the school. In this way the risks to the better children are reduced to a minimum, and are perhaps hardly greater than those incurred by West End children in passing through the streets.

A far more serious matter is the overcrowding which seems to be almost inevitable in a town life. In the daytime this is of comparatively small importance, though even then the effect on character of never being alone is very bad; but the miserably inadequate sleeping accommodation, which is quite invariable amongst working people in London, must be highly injurious to children. Four or five in a bed is a common distribution, and I have known them overflow into the box-mangle, which was considered by the mother to be quite sufficient for two. When we add to this that the same room is used by night and day without a thought of ventilation, we cannot doubt that the seeds of much and serious illness are to be found in this overcrowding of growing children. Nor is the question of ventilation quite such a simple one as it appears to the educationally inclined visitor who demonstrates to the mother the ease of opening a window. Very often the houses are so constructed that what comes in at the window is worse than what goes out. Moreover, those who have lived in the poorer districts have learned that if they are going to keep their windows opened at night, they must be prepared for very unpleasant interruptions to their rest.

Another way in which this overcrowding acts is in the late hours which it encourages, if it does not actually cause

them. Half, at least, of the children cannot go to bed until the sitting-room is done with ; they must keep their parents' hours, and few of them finish their day before ten or even eleven o'clock.

Then, again, the excitement of a town life tells very greatly upon children ; if you look closely you will see that London children are always tired ; the dark rings under their eyes tell of the nervous strain which is breaking down their health, and their very restlessness is the restlessness of fatigue and nervous exhaustion. They begin to share the life of their parents so early that they often seem to have no real childhood. This is especially the case with the first children of a family. The working people of London are a pleasure-loving race, and in their youth, at any rate, their evening engagements are hardly fewer than those of the West End ; the young men and women meet at the theatre, the music hall, often at private parties ; they become acquainted in the course of social life, and when they marry they keep up the same constant round of evening recreations. Then comes the time when the young wife has to choose between child and husband ; it is a moral dilemma which hardly occurs in higher ranks. To stay at home with the child is to lose one of her strongest holds upon her husband—is to cease to share his leisure with him ; to leave the child alone seems impossible. And yet it would probably be safer than the course almost invariably pursued—that of taking the child and exposing it to all the risks of sudden changes of temperature, of crowded rooms, and of the cold night air. "Why do so many Shoreditch babies die of bronchitis?" I asked a shrewd woman. "It's going out at night in all weathers," she said promptly ; "then, when the parents get home, they are not going to take the trouble to light a fire at that time of night, and the baby is undressed in the cold and put into cold night-clothes and a cold bed ; of course they die." Not long ago I counted between thirty and forty infants-in-arms at the Britannia Theatre, and there cannot have been fewer than a hundred present. The later ones fare better ; not only is it easier to leave two or three at home

together, but with increasing years and responsibilities the appetite for pleasure-going diminishes ; the father's habits are settled for good or for bad, and the mother is more content to bide at home. On the other hand, with the increase of the family, there creeps in the system of sub-contracting, which is as liable to abuse in family life as in industry. The mother hands over the baby to the elder children, the elder children to the younger, until three-year-old is left tumbling about the streets in charge of one-year-old, and no one ever knows the narrow escapes and actual mishaps which they undergo.

Another great difficulty against which these children have to contend is their unsuitable diet. Here, again, their needs have to conform to the taste of the parents, and often with disastrous results. In a town, the wholesome, if monotonous, diet of the country is replaced by an immense variety of cheap and "tasty" food, and even the baby has a morsel of everything which is going. "It can eat anything," said a proud woman to me, exhibiting a flabby infant, and the "anything" probably included an assortment upon which most of us would hesitate to venture. The "drink question" also assumes, perhaps, its chief importance with reference to children who drink tea almost as soon as milk, and acquire a taste for alcoholic liquors before they can speak plainly.

It is worth noticing that in poorer districts the dampness of dwelling-houses is emphasised by medical officers as a fertile cause of illness amongst children. Indeed, all the causes which tend to raise the death-rate in poorer London are far more fatal to children than to their elders. Taking the percentage of deaths under five years of age to total deaths in the same district, I find that in five of the worst districts it varies from 44 to 49 per cent, while over all London it is only 36. Camberwell is most instructive in showing how terribly child-life is a prey to circumstance. Taken as a whole district, the rate of deaths under five years is 44 per cent of the whole number ; but it is divided into four subdistricts. In Dulwich the proportion is only 19 per cent, in Camberwell proper it is

36 per cent, in Peckham 40 per cent, and in St. George's 49 per cent.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that the number of those who succumb to these evils is of less importance than the condition of those who survive. All are subject to the same mischievous influences, and those who struggle through bear the marks for life, if not in actual disease, at any rate in impaired vitality. And yet the remedies are so simple; more stringent enforcement of existing sanitary regulations, stricter supervision against overcrowding, and, most important of all, better training of boys and girls for the responsibilities awaiting them: little more than this is needed to make a healthy life for children as possible in poor London as in rich.

This brings me naturally to my third class of children—the invalids. These children, as I have said, are generally in the third generation of London life. But to say this alone is at once too much and too little; it implies a cumulative and inevitable evil in which I do not believe, and the fatalism of the observation seems to yield a little before analysis. Take the child I have already mentioned as No. 3; she is suffering from hip-disease, and will probably never get rid of the complaint in one form or another. A superficial inquiry seems to strengthen the theory of heredity; her father died of consumption, a large family on the mother's side have died of consumption, and the mother herself is delicate. But let us go a little deeper into the family history. On the father's side the grandfather is a native of Islington, a bootmaker by trade, a clever workman, kind-hearted, easy-going, and thriftless, with a wife of distinctly commoner nature. They have a large family of wild, reckless young people, all of them steady so far that, though extravagant, they do not run into excess, but spoiled on the one hand by the mother's quarrelsome temper, on the other by the father's carelessness. Their home is a scene of constant irritation and excitement; they most of them work at their father's trade, and arrange their life so as to work night and day for half the week and play the other half. One of the sisters died

in a lunatic asylum, literally driven mad by the home quarrellings. The others are all living and in good health except the father of No. 3, whose illness was caused by working in poisoned air, and was probably in no way inherited.

On the mother's side both grandparents were country people. The grandfather was hopelessly invalided while comparatively young, and the whole burden of a large little family fell upon his wife. She went out to work, leaving a tribe of babies in charge of the eldest boy, and the mother of No. 3 went to work at the age of twelve, and never ceased until she met her future husband at an evening party. Three years afterwards he broke down, and with two babies the wife had to turn to work again, taking the smallest one with her, to lie about on stone floors and be almost utterly neglected, because she feared to lose the work that was bread to all of them. The other child was adopted by the father's family, and is now as healthy as late hours and unwholesome diet will permit; but the other was tossed from pillar to post while the mother alternately worked and nursed her dying husband. It is, of course, perfectly natural that she should now be suffering from early neglect, but there is nothing in all this which is the inevitable result of town life. If the father's early life had been in better hands, if the sanitary inspector had done his duty by the shop in which he worked, if friends had come to the rescue of No. 3 as they did for her sister—so many "ifs" might have saved this child that it is impossible to regard its fate as inevitable.

I believe the same to be true of thousands of the little invalids who are now looked upon as the necessary victims of town life. They owe their lot to nothing so impressive as an inherited doom, but to a very commonplace carelessness and stupid selfishness on the part of the family and community into which they are born.

One most difficult part of the problem remains. What is to become of the lowest class of children—the children who come of degraded homes and degraded parents—the children who herd together in schools of the worst fame, and streets of the worst reputation? The class is too

large a one to be ignored, though it may easily be overlooked if you keep to the highways. Like rats and mice and blackbeetles these little outcasts shun the open ways, and have their own haunts where they are seldom trespassed upon by the outside world. The responsible members of the family, the fathers and grown-up sons, are generally on guard at the public-house at the corner, waiting patiently for an acquaintance to turn up and stand them a glass, or beguiling the hours with a stray number of *Tit-Bits*. Down a side street and into a little court off it you will find the wives and families at home. It is a peculiarity of these places that the house doors always stand hospitably open, inviting attention to a confusion of chaotic dirt within, and letting out into the street an indescribable odour which at once betrays the class of inhabitant. Every doorway is occupied by a more or less sturdy woman who, with her sleeves rolled up ready for the work which she never does, is comfortably nursing her red elbows until the costermonger, who is yelling at the top of the street, shall make his way down to her. Then she will buy from him some half-rotten fish or decayed fruit and vegetables at the price charged for wholesome food in the open road. Swarming up and down the doorsteps, or camping out in the roadway, are countless numbers of puny, dirty children—a striking contrast to the stout, red-faced women who look on. They live in the roadway; it is quite safe from accidents, for there is no traffic; nobody thinks of passing through, and few people beside the rent-collector have any business in the place itself; and wet or dry, hot or cold, the children swarm up and down, eat and drink, play and even sleep, from each morning to late at night. They can hardly be said to be clothed; they are tied up in old rags, and garments of the most incongruous description are hung on to them with the utmost disregard of the age or shape of the wearer. These are the children who are found in the lowest class school, and there they get the only training or education of any kind which they will ever have. They are always unwashed,—at home because washing does not come within the scope of family life; at school because the risk is too great until

it is possible to have a separate apparatus for each child. They are generally sucking sweets of some description, and they are nearly always one behind with their meals. It is quite true that many of them come to school without having breakfasted, and this is because their parents interpret too literally the maxim of "sufficient unto the day." They empty their cupboard each day, and have to earn a breakfast before they can eat it ; and though the children are always late for school, the household is seldom sufficiently advanced in its operations to feed the children before turning them out. Moreover, experience has taught them that the child who goes fasting to school generally brings home at night a little ticket which enables his father to postpone the problem of next day a little longer.

I must repeat here that the actual instruction which it is possible to drill into these children is absolutely unimportant in comparison with the habits of order and obedience which they are learning. It is their one chance of civilisation. From the age of three to twelve or thirteen they are in good hands, and it is before and after this period that they stand most in need of help. The critical moment of their lives is when they leave school, and in saying this I refer especially to boys. They are then bright, quick, and fond of making themselves useful ; if they could be got straight to work we should find ourselves in twenty years' time almost without a residuum. But their mothers like them at home to help with the children ; their fathers to have them at their heels ready to run errands. If they are put to work at once it is only to a little errand-boy's place, which they lose as soon as they begin to grow lanky. This is true, I am sorry to say, of even the better-class parents, and many a lad is spoiled for life in the interval between school and work. Six months of the idle, undisciplined street life is more than enough to undo all previous training, and it is extraordinary how a course of lounging outside public-houses will change these lads. When they leave school they are bright and responsive ; as cheeky as you like, but quite frankly so, and without any malice about them. They are ready to do anything, and

full of pluck and vitality. But after a year's idleness you can do nothing with them; they will be sulkily stupid when you talk to them, and are as likely as not to throw stones as soon as your back is turned. Any excuse is good enough for refusing work, and the chances are all in favour of confirmed loafing. There is a grand opening for the enterprising school manager who will take one of these schools in hand, catch the boys as they leave, and use all his influence to persuade the parents to put them in a good way of work. It would not be a very difficult task, and the effects would be quite incalculable.

Are London children happy? I think there can be little doubt in answering in the affirmative. Some very fruitful sources of childish misery there are. Illness, of course, is one, and perhaps not less potent the chronic sickliness due to the continual consumption of bad sweets. Drunkenness is another, though this is by no means invariably combined with cruelty, or even unkindness, to children. Even when it is, the genuine slum child has many means of withdrawing himself from notice until the danger is over. On the other hand, the delights of the street are many and great; the daily path to school yields a succession of stolen joys which make it compare very favourably in point of true pleasure with the formal promenade of the little West-ender in fashionable clothes and clean hands. The interests of a wet day are even greater than when it is fine, and the stock plea that the children have got no boots seems to diminish in importance as one sees the deliberate way in which they wade up the gutter, and seek out every puddle to paddle in, utterly regardless of good boots, or bad boots, or no boots at all.

To children of fourteen and fifteen the streets have a perilous fascination in the evening. The glare of the gas-lamps, the busy thronging to and fro, the wild, free intercourse among acquaintances and strangers alike, are irresistible attractions to these excitable young creatures after the monotony of the day. I have seen a letter from a girl of this age describing the delights of the street dance and the meeting of friends, which, though perfectly simple

in expression, was almost passionate in its intensity of feeling, and made me realise more than many failures the impossibility of getting these young girls out of London or into a quiet domestic life. If they are plain or awkward or low-spirited, or in any way unable to hold their own in the boisterous merrymaking, you may succeed; or if you can get hold of them before they have fairly broken away from the restraints of school. But not unless. There is a passion for excitement in all of us which must be satisfied when once it has got the upper hand, and what do we offer these children for the pleasures which we ask them to relinquish? Safety and restraint; and for the one they cannot realise the need, while the other they have learned to hate. We shall never succeed until we can provide some safety-valve through which they can expend the emotional energy which possesses them. I suppose many of us find this safety-valve ourselves in literature, and it is astonishing that so little has been done to place good literature within the reach of the poorest classes. Many of them read it as it is, but for every one that reads now there should be a dozen. Moreover, the stuff they generally read is as injurious as the sweets they are always sucking. In one sense it is harmless enough; there is nothing in it which could be objected to by the most rigid censor of the press; but the sickly sentimentality, the false ideals, the untrue pictures of life which are provided for the poor are a disgrace to both the culture and the enterprise of England. Why do not our publishers cater better for the people than this? It is no answer to say that there is no demand for higher literature. There was no demand for Sapolio until it was properly advertised. There is a fortune waiting for some enterprising capitalist who will re-issue some of our best authors in really popular form; good print, but paper backs, a penny a volume, and advertised as thoroughly as the latest kind of beef-tea or blacking. Literature lends itself to advertisement better than any other kind of commodity; specimen pages well selected and breaking off at a critical moment, dropped down every area in London, with a direction to the nearest

news-shop, would sell off a first edition in an incredibly short time, and when once the appetite was awakened the work would go on of itself.

Now let me sum up briefly the directions which those reforms will take which will have most influence upon the welfare of London children.

1. Better sanitation and stricter regulations against overcrowding.

In a natural state of things the size of a town is settled, or at any rate limited, by its water supply. So many inhabitants will congregate together as can place themselves within convenient proximity to the river, and be supplied by it through all seasons. We have removed that limit by artificial water supplies, and we ought, in common sense, to safeguard ourselves against the results. To do so is no more to interfere with natural liberty than it is to poison the river and divert country lakes into the town as its substitute.

2. Conscientious discharge of duties by employers of labour and factory inspectors, such as will enable work to become once more what it naturally is—the chief source of health and enjoyment.
3. Recognition of the fact that the care of children is as much an art as is the care of animals or the making of chairs and tables, and proper instruction of girls in that art.
4. A more vigorous action of school managers in ensuring that the benefit derived from compulsory attendance at school is not immediately lost on leaving.
5. A supplementation of Board Schools by a system of paying schools, offering a higher and more elastic order of education, and adapted to the needs of the better-class artisan.

6. The placing of good literature within reach of the people.

The two last developments are sure to take place before long as purely commercial undertakings. For the others we must wait an awakening of public knowledge which may be slow to come.