

of cases, nervous overstrain on the part of the parents before the infant's conception appears to be entirely the predisposing cause.

It will be already obvious why mental degeneracy is the offspring of vice, the product of moral corruption, the outcome of abuse.

It may not be quite so obvious why one meets with the same condition in the ranks of the hard-working, clean-living professional, the high-minded, self-denying leader of science, social reform, literature, or religion. It may not be so obvious, but it is there. I think we can find the predisposing cause of the mental condition of degeneracy still to be the overstraining of the nervous system of the parents before the child's conception, though the overstrain may be caused through an altruistic and not a carnal motive.

By these remarks I do not wish to convey the impression that vice is confined to class; morals are not the monopoly of any strata of society.

It is too well known to need more than reference in passing, that the mental degenerate becomes more easily a moral degenerate than a normal person.

Undoubtedly alcohol plays a very important part in the production of mental degeneracy in the next generation; it destroys nervous stability and accounts for much overstrain, and is by no means confined to class or sex. Furthermore, I believe it accounts for much hereditary suffering, and the results can be plainly seen in the nervous and gouty invalids of the present day. In this paper I have spoken of the wastage of child life from but one point of view; that there are many others those who have much knowledge of the question cannot doubt.

It is absolutely impossible to alter the condition of the mental degenerate beyond a very limited point. As regards moral training, it can only be preventive, very slightly progressive. Through a mental equipment so slight, how can the highest in man find expression?

The immortal soul is held in bondage, and so are the sins or mistakes or ignorance of a former generation visited on their children.

Is it not the duty of those who know to speak, and teach self-control, temperance, and the duty due from parents to child, and of the individual to the State, and the State to the child also?

M. SUTTON.

We shall have the pleasure of publishing two more papers under the heading of "The Child" by Miss Sutton, who has wide experience of the subject on which she writes.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF INFANT MORTALITY.

A Special Course of Lectures on Infant Care, for Nurses and Midwives, will be held at the Royal Society of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, W., on Tuesdays, from 3 to 4 p.m., October 5th to December 21st, 1915, with the exception of the first lecture, which will be given in the theatre of the Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.

In addition to the lectures, arrangements will be made for every student, if desired, to attend at four or more Infant Consultations. These facilities are provided at certain selected Infant Welfare Centres, of which a list, giving the addresses and the days and hours on which the consultations are held, will be circulated at the opening lecture.

An examination will be held at the close of the course and certificates awarded.

Application for tickets should be made to the Secretary, 4, Tavistock Square, W.C.

FEEDING BELGIAN BABIES.

The Milk Branch of the Belgian Refugee Food Fund has issued a special appeal to young folks in this country to put away one penny a week, and send them to Lady Williams, at 21, St. James's Street, S.W. The "Letter to the Children of Great Britain and Ireland" recalls the sad history of many mothers and babies of Belgium, driven from their homes and country, whilst their husbands have had to stay behind to fight.

"Think what it means," the appeal proceeds, "you fortunate children, who have your homes, your good food, and so much happiness, to be driven out of your homes, to be obliged to go away to a country where all are strangers. What we ask you to do is to give us some of your pennies for the Belgian babies, instead of spending them on yourselves. Ask your friends, also, to help us. Ask your teachers to collect in the schools, so that to all the little Belgian babies whose mothers come to us we can give good supplies of fresh milk."

A BABIES' HOUSE.

The Duchess of Marlborough opened last Saturday a babies' house at Wealdstone, which is a working-class district near Harrow, and which has been organised by Dr. Barbara Tchaykovsky and a committee. A letter was read from the President of the Local Government Board expressing his interest and approval, and stating that he welcomed the establishment of such institutions.

A TRUE TALE.

A correspondent sends us the following, which she vouches for:—

An old family nurse was informed that one of her nurslings who had married had recently given birth to triplets.

The old lady was greatly excited. "You don't say so," she exclaimed. "I shouldn't wonder next time if it wasn't *quadrupeds*."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)