

SAVING THE FUTURE.

Sir Charles Wakefield, Lord Mayor of London, writing in the *Mothers' Magazine*, edited by Mrs. M. A. Cloudesley Brereton, on "Saving the Future," says: "To a nation absorbed in the task of saving the present, a message concerning the guardianship of the future may at first sight seem superfluous. But, in truth, this matter of the future underlies at the moment our whole activities, whether emanating amidst the turmoil of the battlefield, or radiating from the quietude of the hearth at home.

"Upon the battlefield, this question of the future is implied in the bayonet charge of every private, and in the words of command of every officer, since each soldier understands that upon his individual action and conduct depends the sacred right of the next generation of Englishmen to their heritage of freedom. And, in answer to the claim of the days to come, the youth of Great Britain has gathered from the four corners of the globe, to offer up the supreme sacrifice of personal love and joy, and if need be, of life itself.

"But have we civilians realised that a similar sacrifice for the future must be made by us, not only vicariously through our heroes at the Front, but at home, here and now, through our individual efforts and self-denial? The answer is none too clear. Yet, if we would preserve our ancient liberties, we—the denizens of the greatest city in the world, must meet those claims of the future at home as fearlessly and generously as they are accepted in the trenches.

"As citizens, our chief debt to the future is, I take it, the handing over of our heritage to a numerous and healthy generation who are well equipped both in physical and mental qualities. Failing the payment of this, our debt, the sacrifice of the best blood of Young England will have been made in vain, and no compensation will be found by our successors in the stores of gold and treasure we may bequeath them, if we have failed in our greater task. Many of our citizens have realised, perhaps vaguely, the truth of such assertions; but in the hour of crisis our faith must not be the shadowy acceptance of the truism, but a living belief based on definite and comprehensive knowledge.

"Of facts as to population, public health, and infant mortality, we have at the moment 'God's plenty,' since experts, appalled at the loss of life in the European arena, have of late turned their attention with increased zeal to the records of vital statistics. . . . The facts they can supply are, however, by no means reassuring to the custodians of the cherished country behind the firing line. For instead of the devoted guardianship of budding life that one might have expected from the citizens of a great country, we find the appalling record of a far greater loss at home among the citizens-to-be than that indicated in the Rolls of Honour of those who have fallen on the battlefield. For while, during the first year of the Great

War, we have lost 75,957 of the flower of English manhood, we lose each year 100,000 out of 800,000 babies born into the nation, another 100,000 infants succumbing annually in the pre-natal period.

"And, just as in the battle-field, the figures of those killed in action represent a much larger number of those put out of action, so in the arena of life, each infant that comes to nothing, or dies in the first year of infancy, represents a still larger proportion of babies maimed and injured by the conditions which have exterminated the weaker stocks."

After showing that this loss of infant life is due to no iron hand of destiny, but is more often directly caused by insanitary surroundings, the Lord Mayor refers to the good work done in the direction of prevention by the Marylebone School for Mothers, the Infant Welfare Centres, the Maternity Centres, and the Home Helps lately instituted by the Central Committee for Women's Employment.

After pointing out that localized effort needs to be extended into a national network, he concludes:

"I therefore appeal to the Mayors and Mayoresses of Great Britain, those City Fathers and Mothers of the populations of all great centres, to set this national work in motion by the calling together of a great conference of the men and women of their locality—a Mayoress' Day should, if necessary, be set aside throughout the kingdom—so that together they may devise local weapons in each municipality to fight those ancient city evils of dirt, ignorance and disease, which are menacing our national existence through the slaughter of our citizens-to-be."

EVERY BABY IMPORTANT.

"One thinks more acutely about the deaths of babies at the present time, when every baby's life is so important to the nation," remarked Dr. Major Greenwood, the deputy coroner, at a Hackney inquest.

BABIES OF BELGIUM.

Mrs. Haden Guest is appealing in the press on behalf of the babies of Belgium, who are brought to the infant consultations organized by Dr. Rulot, *Medecin Chef*, Service du Santé et de l'Hygiene, in towns and villages behind the firing line. Some time ago her appeal was generously responded to, and she received a large number of garments and other necessaries, which she was able to take to Belgium. She now writes from the headquarters of the Belgian Soldiers' Fund, 19, James Street, Oxford Street, W., asking for help on behalf of the work of these consultations. A light "run-about" motor is needed to take the garments, and the workers from the different centres, and the smallest subscriptions will be most gratefully received towards the purchase of this motor, addressed to Mrs. Haden Guest as above, or at 16A, John Street, Adelphi, London.

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