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EDITORIAL.

A NATIONAL QUIVER FULL.

The annual report of Sir George Newman, the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1915, has been issued as a Blue-Book, and is a careful study of the question of child welfare—imperative at this crisis to the national existence. It will well repay exhaustive consideration.

Many of the greatest minds in the British Empire are now occupied with the problems which must be faced and solved "after the war." All thoughtful people realize that nothing will, in our time, be ever again the same, as it was before the present cataclysm burst over Europe. The conditions of national finance and of international trade, which have been slowly evolved during hundreds of years, will all be swept into the melting pot, and at present no one can say in what form they will ultimately emerge.

The many social conditions which will be altered, from the bedrock upwards, can at present be only dimly foreseen, but there are certain basic facts which are already apparent. The loss of splendid young British lives is now to be counted by hundreds every week, while thousands are receiving wounds which will more or less disable them from active exertions for the rest of their lives. When it is remembered that it was the best and bravest of Britain's manhood who were the first to answer the country's call, and that it is these who now fill the casualty lists each day—the wastage is seen to be even more utterly piteous to us because it is so utterly irreparable in our day and generation. When the war is over, the first question which the British Empire, and the other nations involved, will have to answer is—How shall this terrible wastage of men be made good?

For the welfare of each race, for the work and prosperity of each country in future, the problem must be solved, as speedily as possible; and it will doubtless be dealt with by each nation in its own instinctive and distinctive methods.

In these islands, we shall probably, therefore, be quite conservative of old time manners and morals; but we trust that we shall carry that conservatism to greater lengths than ever before in our legislation and care for the children. There is not—there never has been—anything radically wrong with the British birth-rate. Compared with that of other nations, our infantile death-rate has not been excessive.

But the first step to be taken—in respect to making good the wastage of war—must be to devote more systematic care, than has ever yet been given, to the development of the nation's greatest wealth—the children of the coming generation. And more happy, than even in the Psalmist's days, will be the country of the future that hath its quiver full of them. More careful education of the mothers of England—as to the feeding, clothing, and rearing of infants; more efficient provision of medical and nursing care for the child in the critical first three years of its life—would in ten years replace the whole male loss of the war. For it is too little understood by the people, that the birth of males in Great Britain is definitely larger than that of females; and that increased care and knowledge would prevent the greater mortality of male infants which, in the first five years of life, reduces the number of each sex to an equality. After infancy, the need for better care of the growing child is becoming recognized, and school doctors and nurses have already accomplished a great national work. The early detection of eye weakness or disease has saved thousands from blindness. The

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