

this apparently happy little rural school. Then the doctor may place the children at twenty feet from the black-board to read a set of standard letters, and ten of the children fail to see the letters well enough to read them; or he may whisper his instructions and two of the children are too deaf to hear him; or he may pick out four who are suffering from anaemia or malnutrition, two from skin disease, or one who is apparently tuberculous; two have rickets and six have adenoids or enlarged tonsils; the teacher will point out to him one who is mentally defective and five are so dull and backward that lessons are lost upon them; by weighing and measuring he finds five are under weight for their age and two are stunted in height; he finds that half of them have teeth already decayed. Here we have a preliminary inventory of disease, and it is not lessened when the doctor fully examines each child. (It must, of course, be borne in mind that several defects may occur in the same child.) A similar survey in the industrial district of a manufacturing town will reveal that 30 or 35 per cent. of all the children present at school are suffering from physical or mental impairment or defect which requires medical treatment, and which at its lowest estimate is debarring the children from receiving reasonable advantage from the education provided for them by the State.

Thus, the first object of the School Medical Service is the ascertainment of the ailing child and its effective treatment, an objective which involves careful examination of each individual child, patient "following-up," the provision of the means of treatment and suitable after-care, and the adaptation of our educational system to their needs and capacity. The pursuance of this service entails much organisation and expenditure, but it is a service which is profoundly changing for the better the whole physical and mental life of hundreds of thousands of individual children, and opening for each of them the gates of opportunity.

This systematic medical inspection of all children is a heavy and exacting undertaking, and the records of it make dull and monotonous reading. *But it is absolutely necessary thus to find the facts.* Each child must be examined and studied individually, for each has its individual characteristics. In total, it is the grand inquest of a nation, and the only means for discovering, and then strengthening, the weak points of the individual child. Yet there is another, a wider and a more public effect of the organisation of the physical care of the child. It is that of laying the foundation of the national health. In former times, even down to fifty years ago, the duty and scope of the public health service was to provide a sanitary environment for the people. Housing, clean streets, water supply, drainage and sewerage, refuse removal, disinfection, quarantine, the isolation hospital and poor law relief constituted the principal programme. But the advance of medicine and surgery has built upon that foundation a new superstructure. For now the sphere of the public health service, though still to maintain a sanitary environment, is also concerned with maternity and motherhood, the protection of infancy and childhood, health insurance, industrial welfare, dietary and food supply, international health, the direct treatment and prevention of disease—tuberculosis, rickets, venereal disease, diphtheria, typhoid, cancer, rheumatism—the creation of the great public medical services, the restoration of the cripple, the re-education of the blind, and above all the establishment of a healthy way of life. It is a new kind of emancipation, the aim of which is not the improvement of the externals of man's life alone, but the improvement of man himself, the prolongation of his days, the strengthening of his physique, the gift of health, the enlargement of his capacity. Milton's "betterment of man's estate" is giving way to the betterment of man; sanitation is surpassed by social evolution.

It is manifest that a healthy childhood of sound physique is the genesis on which alone this new Preventive Medicine

can be established. Every infant saved from death in infancy and every school child equipped for useful citizenship is a living stone in this new building. The school doctor who makes possible the mending of an ailing child makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before. He is laying the only possible foundation of national health and he builds for the future. For the routine work of the school medical service has a vastly wider purpose than the collection of medical statistics and even the individual amelioration of a particular child. It makes practicable a fuller education of the people as a whole, it adds to life "the joy of those who are healed," it is the prelude of national efficiency. Let us make no mistake about it. The science and art of Medicine has contributed substantially, not to say immeasurably, to the higher evolution of school life. It was the apostles of Medicine who demanded more warmth, light and air in the schoolroom; it was they who made evident the need for the practical teaching of hygiene; they who proved that the child must be fed before it could be taught; they who won for it the larger physiological interpretation of physical training and of games; they who said that the system of education must be adapted and modified for the defective child. Count up the thoughts with which these five scientific reforms have filled the heart of England, and consider what they are accomplishing in bringing "sweetness and light" into the child's school days and still more into his after-days. The vitalising effect of sunlight and the open air; the reward of obedience to the laws of health; nutrition as the one thing needful; the necessity of physical exercise to growth and development; and an enlightened education of the abnormal and retarded child—can it be denied that these are among the supreme gifts and liberties which a single generation has added to the old school rule of an oppressive discipline, dedicated to Greek verb and Latin verse?

If when the reader turns to study these dull records of the school medical service, its audit and account, he will come with understanding, he will find a plain tale of the narrow way, the discovery of the ailing child and the healing of tens of thousands of individuals. But on closer observation with the seeing eye he will find nothing less than the broad highway of a nation's health. He will discover the hidden secret of an unseen reform, a service of science and humanity, which is silently but certainly changing the prospects and hopes of the English people."

SANATORIA AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The health of boys in public schools, and the provision of proper sanatorium and sick-room accommodation, was, says the *Times*, the subject of an investigation recently made for the Ministry of Health by Captain Dalrymple Champneys, M.D., who reported great variation between one school and another in the arrangements made. In only one or two of the schools visited was the Voluntary Hospitals Commission's standard of space necessary per sick bed attained or exceeded. The older schools, and even some of the newer ones, especially those situated in towns, have been very limited in their choice of sites for sanatoria, which should preferably be at a distance from the main school buildings and in a high, open position. The memorandum laid down standards, any provision far short of which must, it stated, be regarded as definitely unsatisfactory. To provide an opportunity for discussion of the subject, the Parents' Association has arranged a conference to be held at the London Day Training College on February 22nd, at 3 p.m., when Sir Rennell Rodd, M.P., will preside. The speakers will include M. F. Fletcher (Head-master of Charterhouse), Captain Dalrymple Champneys, Mr. L. R. Lemprière (Medical Officer, Haileybury), and others. Application for invitations should be made to Miss J. M. Harvey, 56, Manchester Street, W.1.

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