

THE CARE OF THE SCHOOL CHILD

A COURSE OF LECTURES DELIVERED UNDER
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INTRODUCTION

THE men who have given the following lectures are experts in their several departments of life. They have given freely and readily the ripe fruits of their knowledge and experience, first to those who can use them for the good of the children, and now to the public at large. Their generous patriotism deserves our thanks. Without reward or reserve they are giving to us in these lectures knowledge beyond all price. Their conduct stands out in noble contrast with the conduct of those who have devised ways of making profit out of the sorrows, losses, and heavy burdens of this time. The patriotic motto "None of us to be the richer for the War" does not appeal to those who measure values by money. It is an ignoble and deceitful standard of measurement. The welfare of man is the Divine standard; and this is the measure which these lectures apply to life.

The stern events of our time are awakening people to the value of human life, which has so long been reckoned as cheap, and used too often as a means of attaining some baser end. Economists have sometimes worked out the value of man in pounds, shillings, and pence. To-day we know that man is more precious than gold, and his welfare ought to be the recognized purpose of

our efforts. The lesson of the following lectures is one and the same: healthy, honest, truthful, self-ruling and self-sacrificing children are the best asset of nations.

The need of keeping such an aim clearly and constantly before us will be evident to those who read these lectures. They will realize how much needs to be done when they know (p. 11) that out of more than 294,000 children inspected in the London County Council Schools, over 100,000 were found to require treatment—i.e. about one-third of those inspected needed medical attention. Take one particular and most important matter of health—the teeth—and observe that when 56,491 children were inspected in 1914, as many as 46,290 required a dentist's care (p. 12). Caries, which one dictionary describes as ulceration of bone, is found in increasing prevalence in the teeth of children as they grow older. At the age of three the percentage of dental caries was high, as much as 46 per cent.; but at sixteen the percentage had risen to 87·1 (pp. 95, 96). Read what we are told in these lectures about the eye and the ear, the nose and the tonsils, and the need for continued and vigilant care of growing children will be evident. We shall learn how we often blunder in our school methods because we fail to take a true and comprehensive view of child welfare.

Had space permitted, I should have liked to mention in detail some of the many striking and valuable things which are said in these lectures. I can only say that to those who love their country, and realize how precious is every indi-

vidual to her national life, these lectures will be welcomed, as they help to point out the way by which the citizens of the future may be reared as strong, vigorous, self-governing, equable and happy men and women.

If service to our fellow-men is a supreme duty in life, the end of education should be to make them serviceable. Schools can do much to promote this fitness for life, but, as is pointed out in these pages, to secure it we need wholesome influences in the home. If home and school join hands in the care of our children, bodily fitness and mental energy joined to wise development of moral and spiritual capacity may be the priceless inheritance of the citizens of our Empire in the glorious and difficult days to come.

W. BOYD CARPENTER.

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September 1916.

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