

courts. Do we ever think of what a vast number of people there are in jail and what a great loss and an enormous expense their being there means to the State? The cost of catching, prosecuting and supporting criminals is one of the largest items of public expenditure, to say nothing of the far greater loss involved in the withdrawal of these men from useful citizenship. We are inclined to look on crime as inevitable, but it is very largely, if not entirely, preventable. Criminals, unlike poets, are made, not born, and they are for the most part made in childhood. Criminal careers begin in childhood. The characters of adults are fixed by time and habits. Trained in honesty a man remains honest. Habituated to crime he is an unreformable criminal. Children are plastic, men are malleable. A child is a lump of putty, soft and easily moulded, and taking its character from its surroundings. Gradually its actions harden into habits and habits shape its destiny.

Despite the undeniably great influence which heredity exerts on the individual both mentally and physically, it has no *direct* effect on his moral character. His morals are primarily the result of his environment. *Indirectly*, as we shall presently see, heredity is often a very important factor. Inherited mental and physical characteristics often determine the extent to which a person is affected by environmental influences, good or bad. But morals are not themselves inherited. A child comes into the world neither moral nor immoral but simply unmoral. Right living is something that must be acquired. The idea that babies are born as criminals, once popular, has been found to be false. It is as impossible that a child can be born a criminal as that it can be born with a knowledge of the Greek language. That a criminal could be recognized by certain physical characteristics or stigmata was at one time a common opinion. That is not true. These indications point, not to criminality, but to defec-

tive mentality. A person of abnormal mentality is not necessarily a criminal but he is much more likely to become one than a person of average intelligence, because in the first place he has not sufficient intelligence to apprehend that happiness depends upon well doing and, secondly, he has not sufficient power of self-control to enable him steadily to pursue an adopted course of action. Epilepsy is often accompanied by anti-social tendencies which frequently occasion the most revolting crimes. Low or abnormal mentality, feeble-mindedness and epilepsy are all hereditary and when these conditions are accompanied by crime the only effective remedy is usually permanent institutional care. These cases are the despair of the Juvenile Court, and while the percentage of them among first offenders is small, they account for a much larger proportion of the repeaters.

In the case of a certain number of children, delinquency is due to physical defect. Adenoid growth or eye strain or ear ache robs a child of nervous force which is required for carrying on the ordinary functions of the body and an abnormal condition is brought about which results in extreme irritability, lack of self-control and consequent delinquency. We had a boy in Ottawa who could not be kept from stealing. He had a crooked neck due to a slight spinal curvature. We straightened his neck and he stopped the thieving. A straight neck kept him straight. He is now fairly launched on a useful and honest career.

Apart from these abnormal cases, which do not together account for more than from five to ten per cent. of first offenders, the child delinquents are ordinary normal children and their unfortunate moral condition is attributable to environment. They are just what your children or my children would be if similarly situated. And it is from these as well as from the abnormal that our criminal population is being constantly re-