

benevolence also provided places of refuge for children left destitute, and George Mueller's Homes at Bristol, Spurgeon's Orphanage, and Barnardo's Homes became world-famed.

In all these institutions, however, whether private or public, one vital element was wanting, and that element is the purpose of Judge Neil's scheme to provide. He is one of the men who have the courage to say that the love of even an imperfect mother is better than the watchful care of the most perfect official, and that a real home, however poor and ill-managed, is better than the best-appointed institution. It is bad policy to raise children in large groups, but it has also been found that home-life is better even than little "groups"; that Mother's love, like mother's milk, is a scientific necessity. You can put a baby into a cleaner bed than its mother's, give it cleaner cow's milk, and tend it with the most scientific and sanitary care, yet it will pine for the want of a mother's coddling. It needs the mother's love.

Judge Neil, a typical American, full of energy, shrewd, clear-headed, wise, and practical, had no thought six years ago of devoting himself to a work of this kind; he was a business man living in the outskirts of Chicago. One day he paid a visit to the Juvenile Court of his town and sat beside the Judge, a personal friend. A poor woman whose husband had been dead three years appeared with five children; she had tried to maintain her family by charring. She was now too ill to work and the landlord had given her notice to leave her home, so she had come to the Court for aid. In the usual way it was arranged that one child should go to one institution, another to a second institution, etc., and all, even the youngest, were taken away from the mother, who probably would never see them again.

"Is this the help you are going to give this mother?" asked Judge Neil. "Wouldn't it be better to take her out to the back of the Court and shoot her now that you have taken the children away from her?" He asked who met the cost of the institutions, and was told that each received \$10 per month for each child from the county rates. "Why not pay this \$50 to the mother and allow her to keep her children?" asked Judge Neil. "Because the law says we must take the children from her and place them in institutions." "Well, why not change the law?" In that question the Judge dropped a seed which grew and flourished, and the harvest is a great social reform. For to-day more than 100,000 children are maintained at home by and with their mothers at the cost of the State.

Speaking of the relative cost of maintaining children in institutions and paying pensions to mothers, Judge Neil pointed out that the "mother method" is the cheaper. "We have found," he said, "that the average cost per child is from \$25 to \$30 a month in a public institution, and that an allowance to the mother of one-third that sum is sufficient to provide food, clothing, and shelter." In the case of institutions, buildings have to be erected and salaries paid to officers.

Mr. Neil was asked why only one State (Michigan) provides for the children of unmarried mothers. "There is a great prejudice in our country," he replied, "against any effort that would seem in any way to give the slightest countenance to illegitimate children. I hold that the child ought not to suffer; it could not help its parentage, but we shall have to wait for the evolution of a right opinion upon the question."

Judge Neil also explained that children both of whose parents are bad or untrustworthy are dealt with by the authorities as before, and the children are boarded out with families to get as much home-life as possible. "We do not regard it as a charity," said Mr. Neil, "but as a national obligation; therefore we preserve the mother's self-respect; the remittances to the mother are sent regularly by post; we do not concern ourselves with the question as to how it comes about that children are left or how the mother is made dependent upon the State, but we are concerned with the fact that the children are helpless, and the wise State regards the child as the real foundation of national life and upon whom every care should be bestowed."

What is Canada, what is British Columbia, doing for this class of children, who form part of the foundation of our national life and upon whom every care should be bestowed? If we have an interest in the future of our country, that it shall be