

little and laughed a little in changing mood, this spark of life might have been considered a pathological specimen, and in truth it was discussed as such. No one there had a thought of that small life developing into wholesome life and passing through its natural term; not one life were impossible, and that nothing could be done to save it. The intent was to study the pathology and fix that by name. They said, when their technical language was translated, "this child is suffering from the error, some would say the sin of its parents." How deep did this error go? In what strange forms did it appear? How singular that the nervous system, once impressed with the poison of that error, should impress another nervous system, and so modify the nutrition of the organism to which it belonged as to cause false nutrition of internal organs and of the very bones themselves! In a whisper one of the learned expressed to another one the pity "that such a specimen of humanity should ever have been born, to breathe and take notice, and smile, and cry, and love, and suffer, and die, and we be able to do nothing for it except hope for the relief that should end in the earliest death."

I belong to a committee which takes under its care another class of sad childhood. The members of this community pass before us deaf and mute. We try to give them the powers of intelligent converse by laborious and artificial means, and we do some good; but the train of sufferers passes by, and we know that full half are mute from the undeveloped brain; that they are practically lost to life. It is not that the one sense is lost, and thereby the means of expression by intelligible language; it is not even that the nervous organization which ministers to intelligence is low; it is that these deficiencies are some of the outward signs of a general deterioration of body, and that there is scarcely a structure which the eye of science would recognize as moulded in health.

Passing from the sphere of general observation, from modified to destroyed vitality, I find more startling effects at hand. A short essay reached me not long ago in which the writer epitomises the facts he has collected respecting the attainment of maturity in peoples of different nations. He tells us that of ten children born in Norway a little over seven reach their twentieth year; that in England and in the United States of America somewhat less than seven reach that stage; that in France only five reach it; and in Ireland less than five. He tells us that in Norway out of ten thousand born rather more than one out three reaches the age of seventy; in England one out of four; in the United States, if both sexes be computed, less than one out of four; in France, less than one out of eight; and in Ireland less than one out of eleven. And he adds this significant computation, based on what may be called the commercial view of the vital question. In producing dead machinery the cost of all that is broken in the making is charged to the cost of that which is completed. If we estimate by this same rule the cost of rearing children to manhood, if we calculate up the number of years lived by those who fell, with the years of those who passed successfully to manhood, there would be found between the two extremes presented in Norway and Ireland,—both, be it observed unnatural,—a loss of one hundred and twenty per cent. greater in the first year of life, seventy-five per cent. greater in the first four years of life, and one hundred and twenty per cent. greater in the years between the fifth and the twentieth, in Ireland than in Norway. In Norway the average length of life of the effective population is thirty nine and rather more than a half years; in England, thirty-five and a half years; in France, not quite thirty-three years; and in Ireland not quite twenty-nine years. Thus, again comparing the best with the worst of a scale of vitality in which both are bad,