

them, and no administration in water-tight compartments can be permanently satisfactory.

There is one other point to which I wish to draw your attention, because of its supreme importance to the national development, and because the opportunity, if once neglected, will vanish never to return. In Canada you have the opportunity of securing a healthy and a satisfactory environment, such as in the Old World we can never see again. The slums and courts and alleys which disgrace our cities and manufacturing towns need never have come into existence. When I say that, where some of our worst slums in Birmingham stand to-day, a century ago were market gardens, you will understand what I mean. By securing a healthy and satisfactory environment for your citizens you will do much to remove the antecedent conditions which tend to disease and distress, but it cannot be too strongly urged upon your notice that the attempt to secure the racial fitness of the nation by purely environmental reforms alone and the removal of the mother and child from unhealthy surroundings will be vain unless you have regard to the nature of the stock from which they spring. Nature is

stronger than nurture. If your stock is degenerate, your future citizens will be inefficient. A healthy childhood springing from a sound parentage is the greatest economic asset of a nation.** In England, in our efforts to ameliorate the lot of the weak and inefficient by environmental reforms we are in danger of penalizing the sounder stock. We have not only hindered nature from weeding out our social wastage, but we have made the conditions increasingly favorable to the multiplication of this degeneracy, and are producing a population of lower average fitness. "Parentage and motherhood have been placed at a grave disadvantage in the battle of life relatively to childlessness. The child is economically a commodity which, like other wares, is produced to meet the demand."* It has been stated that a high birth rate connotes a high infant mortality rate, but there need be no relationship between the two. By securing a healthy environment, and a sound education in healthy habit and conduct, much may be done to reduce the latter, but the chief thing will be lacking if there is not, in addition, a healthy motherhood. See to it that the former is encouraged.

REDUCING INFANT MORTALITY.

By BENJAMIN A. GOULD, A.M. (Harvard)

In these days when a diminishing birth-rate is occupying the attention of the governments of many countries, it is of increasing importance that the death-rate of infants should be reduced to as low a point as possible. Much has already been done toward this end, but the mortality of infants under two years old is still alarming.

By far the greater part of this mortality is caused by malnutrition. The deaths from other causes are becoming better and better controlled, and the advances made in municipal sanitation and the increasing knowledge of sanitary requirements is aiding greatly along these lines. The most important need, however, is for better nutrition for the infant until it reaches the

age when it can use the ordinary foods of the household.

There is, of course, nothing superior to the mother's own milk, provided that it is normal and sufficient in quantity and that the infant is normal. The number of mothers, however, who are either unable or unwilling to nurse their children is far greater than in the less complex conditions of society a few years ago. Again, the milk of the mother cannot be varied to suit any peculiar needs of a child not entirely normal in its digestive functions, and furthermore, many mothers are unwilling to adopt the strict and systematic diet necessary for the best results for the child.

Up to very recently there has been no

***The Problem of National Eugenics," Prof. Karl Pearson. *Loc. cit., p. 29.