

creatures are weary with their play and ready to be loved and caressed. Fathers, I plead, don't lose your share in this precious time, when most of the character-building is done of the men and women to be. Your gold, if got at the expense of this, will be as dust and ashes in your mouth in the years to come.

In giving a lecture to mothers in Central Otago, I said, the Bible talks about the joyful mothers of children: that is what we ought to have, and what the Plunket Society is trying to bring about—joyful mothers of healthy and normal children. "Do you know any joyful mothers of children?" I asked. A pause, and then one mother said: "I know one, but she lives at St. Clair." I was very interested in this joyful mother, and inquired what kind of a husband she had. I found he is a lover still. Is this one of the secret causes of so little joy in motherhood—that husbands have ceased to be lovers? When one remembers that childhood is the most impressionable time of one's whole life, we ought to realise how imperative it is that children should be surrounded by joyousness, rightness, and brightness, that they might drink it in as the flowers the dew.

One writer says: "Yet the first seven years! Oh, the ineffable, ineradicable memories of these earlier years, cut deep into the plastic mind of a little child! Those who guide and mould the cutting should remember they are moulding for eternity, and cut high and holy things which are noble and true. Half a century hence, when what has intervened has faded and been forgotten, the men of to-morrow will look back and remember the good or ill—the most passing thing said to the child of to-day." Thomas Bracken, in his poem on "Woman's Rights," says:

'Tis woman's right, ere we prepare
To battle in life's van,
To shape our future destinies
And mould the mind of men;
And here, where we're erecting on
Pacific's breath, a State,
The mothers of our rising race
Can make it poor or great.

If we realised more the power of the moulding of the mind, as well as of the body, during this building period, there would be fewer problems for our future statesmen to solve. If the mind is so plastic and impressionable during early childhood, how much more so during the period referred to? Is not mind the product of mind, even

if not so materially. Mind influences mind. Therefore it is incumbent on those responsible—in the nature of things—to ensure that the mind of the mother is peaceful, joyous, and happy.

Then, we should not be blaming our dead and gone ancestors who cannot stand up and defend themselves—poor things—for many of the contrary, resentful, and inexplicable characteristics to be seen in some children. We do not dream of exonerating our ancestors from blame—neither will future generations exonerate us—but our ancestry have enough blame due to them without giving them that which they have not earned.

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