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# The Handicap of the Well-Born Child | TIZ Makes

treatment given him being designed not only to develop his mental powers, but still more to instil in him self-confidence and habits of self-control. Three months after his admission he was entered in the third grade of a Philadelphia public school, and in less than nine months was promoted to the sixth grade—the normal grade for a boy of his age. He had been saved from a life of hopeless inadequacy and started on hopeless inadequacy and started on the road to a sane, complete manhood.

Or, again, supplementing parental ignorance of the importance of proper adjustment of the environment, neg-lect of the physical condition of chil-dren may be a most influential factor in the misshaping of a life. Take, for example, the case of a fourteen year old boy, Harry M., likewise saved for society. This boy, whose mother died when he was only five, had been for several years in the care of a stepmother, who, as often happens, had been somewhat unsympathetic and perhaps unnecessarily pathetic and perhaps unnecessarily harsh in her treatment of him. The older he grew the more he seemed to justify her belief that he was an innately "bad" boy, and in truth his conduct at last became such as to fill all who knew him with the direct

forebodings.

Before he was twelve he displayed a recklessness, maliciousness, and ir ritability of temper that continually brought him into trouble in school and home. Still worse, he developed a propensity for stealing valuable articles from the house and selling them for a few cents, which he spent in entertaining himself in not altogether wholesome ways. The climax gether wholesome ways. The climax came when he was caught stealing from a neighbor, and haled into the Juvenile Court, where he was put on probation. All means of discipline failing he was finally, with little hope that any good would come of it, taken to the University of Pennsylvania's psychological clinic for examination.

One fact which was now discovered

One fact which was now discovered for the first time was that his mouth and teeth were in such a deplorable condition that they must long have been a cause of constant and almost earable nervous irritation. Den work was at once begun, with unbearable nervous irritation. the interesting result that as it progressed the better boy he became. He was then placed in a private school, where, in less than a year, by the simple process of putting him on his honor and trusting him in matters great and small, his behavior became that of a normal, healthy boy, and he justified in every way the expectations of those in charge

SO, too, with another case which has recently come to my knowledge, and which is even more deserving of the thoughtful consideration of parents, since it is representative of a far more widely existent condition than the retarded state of Edgar C., or the nervousness of Harry M., and a condition that is likewise entirely preventable.

In this instance a Pennsylvania schoolmaster of psychological in-sight and training, Mr. C. K. Taylor, had his attention disagreeably drawn to one of his pupils, a boy of nearly fifteen, by the latter's restlessness and mischievousness in class, his habit of perpetually cribbing at ex-

aminations, and his aversion to join-ing in the sports of the school. Instead of punishing the boy for his classroom peccadillos, or con-tenting himself with sending a warning message to his parents - people of the social rank from which come usually the pupils of first-class pre-paratory schools such as this washe resolved to gain his confidence and to discover if possible just what was wrong. To this end he made him his companion on long walks, caused him to feel that he had a real

interest in him, and little by little got so close to Bob that the latter finally freed his soul in a confession that would have horrified his parents could they have heard it.

The fact that he had been surreptitiously smoking for more than

two years was the least of the secret vices to which Bob made sorrowful confession. Whence his "badness" he did not know, though as he told his story his sympathetic listener rec-ognized in it the not surprising result of parental neglect - a neglect due, as likely as not, to the erroneous but prevalent notion among people of refinement and culture that their children are naturally so "innocent" that they will "instinctively" shun the ways of wickedness. But Bob evidenced a sincere desire to gain the strength of will he so sadly lacked; and from that moment Mr. Taylor made up his mind to play for him the part of a spiritual physician

THAT was in February. In May the boy started at track work, and that summer, on Mr. Taylor's suggestion, his parents sent him to a suggestion, his parents sent him to a small camp, where he was given opportunity for plenty of tramping, rowing and swimming. He returned home "a different boy, in character, in attitude towards his work, and in his every thought. In the fall he went in for football, in the winter basketball and in the services." went in for football, in the winter basketball, and in the spring re-sumed track athletics, winning the mile open against the best runners in the school. In the interim Mr. Taylor had developed in him a keen interest in his studies, and, after another summer in camp, he showed not only remarkable physical growth but a mental ability and a moral power that amazed and delighted his parents.

As compared with his condition at the time Mr. Taylor took him in hand he had increased physically from two inches of lung expansion to six and a half inches, from ninety-seven pounds in weight to one hun-dred and forty, had grown six inches in height, and was eight inches broader around the shoulders! All this in not much more than two

These three instances — I have not the space to cite more — show plainly the redemptive possibilities open even when deterioration is far advanced. But surely they bring out advanced. But surely they bring out even more clearly the urgent desirability of taking steps to prevent deterioration from setting in at all. For every backward boy of good parentage who comes into the hands of men like Dr. Witmer and Mr. Taylor, there must be hundreds who grow up to a defective manhood wholly because they have not been started right and have never been shown how to "get right."

Simplification of the child's environment from the first day of dawning consciousness; the surrounding

ing consciousness; the surrounding of him not with a dazzling profusion of objects of luxury, but with well-chosen and well-arranged furnishings chosen and well-arranged furnishings and ornaments which, while minimizing mental strain, will awaken and confirm in him a love of the truly refined and beautiful; the enforcement of habits of sound physical exercise and personal cleanliness; watchfulness over one's own words and conduct when in his presence, so as to avoid sowing seeds of evil by the contagion of a bad of evil by the contagion of a bad example; avoidance so far as is possible of bringing to his notice anything that might cause a profound emotional shock; constant alertness to detect any indications of incipient "nervousness;" and, above all, an incilligent and systematic training of telligent and systematic training the child in the correct use of reasoning powers, so that he shall be accustomed from an early age to think for himself and to think accurately — such are some of the funda-mentals in an efficient parenthood.

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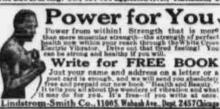
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