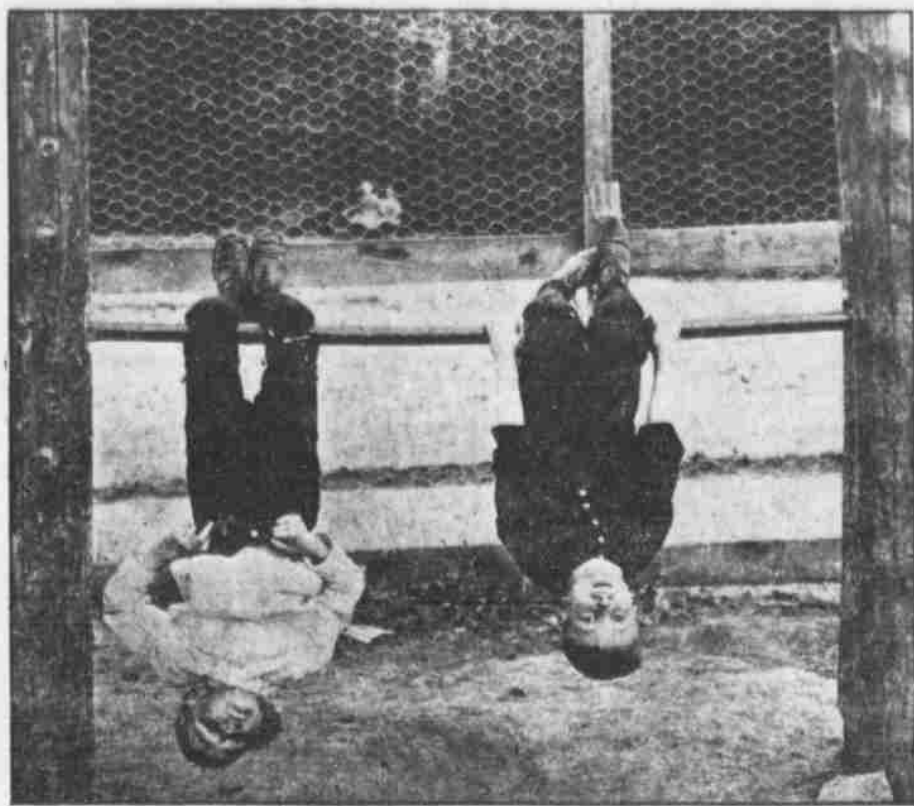


Public Playgrounds as an Element in Modern Training of Children



ATHLETIC STUNT FOR LITTLE GIRLS.



KIDS WHO WILL BE ACROBATS SOME DAY.



FEETER BOARD AT OMAHA PLAY GROUND.

THE new playgrounds for Omaha children are only temporarily located at Nineteenth and St. Mary's avenue, but at this time they are as complete as though no thought of movement existed in the minds of the directors of the city which have charge of the place, and each day at least 100 children take advantage of this opportunity to play and to stand under the shower baths which are maintained for both boys and girls.

The Omaha playground had its origin in a meeting held at the court house about three years ago when a federation of the local improvement clubs was formed. A number of committees were appointed and one, with the late Frank Heller at its head, was named on public playgrounds. Other committees slept, but Mr. Heller's committee never stopped work until, a year later, the grounds at Twentieth and Harnes streets were secured and a few devices for the children installed. Mr. Heller continued playgrounds until his death.

At the death of the first superintendent, the committee decided that the work should be conducted by an independent association, and in April, 1907, the Omaha Playground Association was formed. It is associated with similar associations in other parts of the country for mutual assistance and study of child life. At the head of the new association was placed a directorate of sixteen, the first board being C. E. Williamson, Dean George A. Beecher, Dr. Clifford Joseph Cudaly, Thomas H. Matters, Luther Kountze, Mrs. A. D. Brandeis, George F. West, Mrs. E. A. Cudaly, T. J. Mahoney, Mrs. Draper Smith, Fred Nash, Mrs. Harriet Heller, W. D. Bancker, Miss Stella Hamilton and S. P. Morris.

Getting the New Grounds.

One of the first problems which confronted the directorate was the selection of new grounds, as the old ones had passed into the hands of commercial life. For several weeks the committee which had been named to select grounds was in doubt. George West was at its head, and he finally secured from the Kountze estate a lease for a year on the present site. This lease was signed May 22, and as soon as possible the committee began to install the paraphernalia which had been secured from the old improvement club committee, with such other devices as it had been able to acquire.

At the present time a double equipment in many respects is maintained. One for the boys' department and one for the girls, and the kindergarten class. This double equipment includes merry-go-rounds, taster boards, slides, giant swings and horizontal and perpendicular bars. For the kindergarten class there are sand boxes and for the smaller boys a giant stride. The shower bath is such an extent, as there is only one and boys and girls both use it.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the playground is the manner in which it is managed. The boys' department is turned over to the boys themselves and they are responsible to the superintendent for the maintenance of the grounds and the misconduct of the boys who visit the grounds. In order to fulfill their responsibilities the boys organized a "juvenile city," a citizen being a regular attendant at the playgrounds who desires to take part in its management. A mayor is elected and a council chosen by the boys at stated periods and these officials are held responsible for the order maintained on the grounds. Penalties consist of admonition for first offenses, followed by suspension from privileges of the grounds, and in extreme cases expulsion may be enforced, but so far as the records show it has never been necessary to enforce more than the lightest penalty. The council sits in a discarded street car on the grounds.

Boys Busy with Politics.

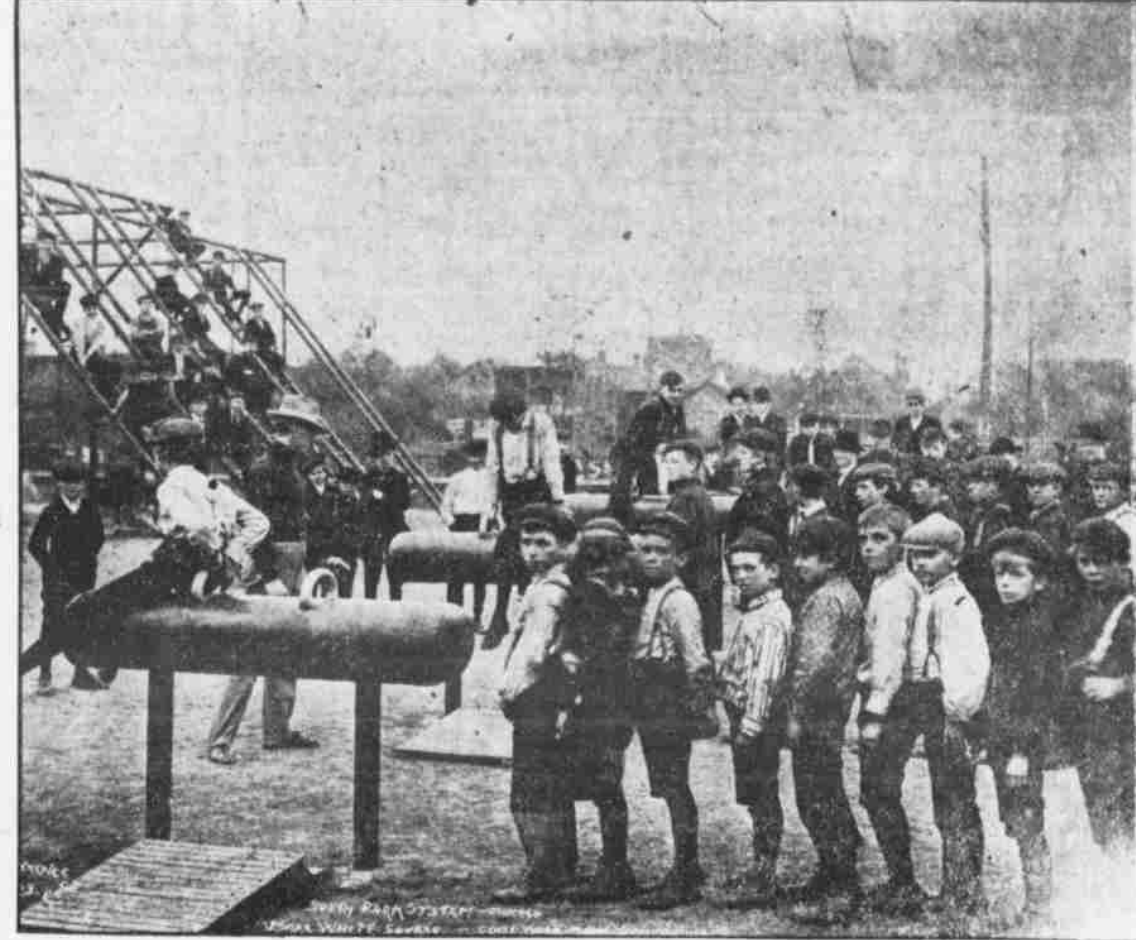
The boys take considerable interest in the political affairs of juvenile city and an election is scheduled to take place shortly after the formal opening of the grounds. For this reason there is more political discussion going on now than in many elections where the fathers of the boys are concerned. In a few days the boys will have a button to designate their citizenship, such buttons having been ordered several weeks ago. It is the intention of the boys, by means of the buttons, to spread the fame of the playgrounds throughout the city and endeavor to interest all boys in the workings of the juvenile city.

In charge of the work, as general director, is William Fraser, who has devoted considerable time to the subject. Helping him in a voluntary way are a number of young men from the Young Men's Christian association, who visit the grounds and show the boys the best manner in which to use the gymnastic paraphernalia. Mr. Fraser also has personal charge of the boys' department.

Assisting the manager and in charge of the girls' and kindergarten department is Miss Florence True, who came to Omaha from Chicago, where she received special training for kindergarten work such as is needed in public playgrounds. At the present time the board of directors is deeply interested in securing permanent quarters for the playgrounds. According to statements of members, the grounds should be "central" and so located that they would be in reach of the largest possible number of Omaha children without the use of street cars; they should be level and as large as possible under other necessary conditions. An effort will be made to secure co-operation between the playground association and the Park board, in an effort to have one of the suggested



WOMEN'S GYMNASIUM, MARK WHITE SQUARE, CHICAGO.



CLASS WORK, MEN'S GYMNASIUM, MARK WHITE SQUARE, CHICAGO.

"rest parks" given over to the use of the children through the association.

Mrs. Heller Reports Convention.

"For this century we have entered upon a new work; we have started out to make it an educational convention. What they make of it will depend upon what we make of them," says Graham Taylor in a recent magazine article.

Perhaps no more fitting sentiment could introduce an effort to briefly review that most unique gathering which so recently closed in Chicago the first annual convention of the Play Ground Association of America. Though dominated by the distinctly social and philanthropic workers, it was an educational convention. Though there was no discussion of methods of teaching reading or the comparative value of the Roman or English pronunciation, yet it was an educational "gabfest," and its message was delivered in the vernacular of the pedagogues—albeit was at times much popularized.

In certain perspective one is tempted to pronounce this gathering the very top crest of the restless, on-coming, overtowering educational wave, making way for the assured time when there shall be no division line between questions sociological and educational.

Chicago, with its special park commission, which has just installed eleven parks with playground centers at an expenditure of \$2,000,000, was a most fitting place for the convening of such a gathering. For two days the program consisted of papers and discussions; the third day was given over to a grand play festival in which 1,000 children participated in view of an assemblage of 5,000 adults.

Play and play grounds were discussed from points of view varying from an aid to good citizenship to the prevention of tuberculosis and delinquency. Play for the city, the country, the little, the big, the young and the old only then they call it recreation. The names most familiar of the notable handling these themes were Dr. Luther Gulick, Frank J. Foster, Miss Jane Adams, Miss Mary MacDowell and Dr. Henry B. Fayall of Chicago; Mr. Seth T. Stewart, Mrs. Gerber and Miss Marie Hofer of New York; Dr. Henry S. Curtis of Washington, D. C.; Mr. Joseph Lee of Boston. A composite paragraph attempt to reflect the trend of the whole discussion would run something like this:

"Play is the natural spontaneous activity by which the whole animal world instinctively fits itself during the immature period for the achievements of maturity."

The developing period of the human young being comparatively very long and increasing with civilization—its play is of great importance. Play, then, is the work of childhood. Schools, per se, are very well, but at best present a stilted artificial rather than a real, preparation for life, and so the convention was repeatedly told, if children can't have schools and playgrounds both, playgrounds are by far the more essential.

For play there must be freedom, space and direction. Children soon exhaust their own ideas and initiative or are lost in a mire of attempted organization or crowded out by the bullying and injustice of the coarse and rude. A sand plot in a vacant lot with a good play director will bring to itself several times the number of children per day that a fine equipment, shade and more spacious grounds, without a director can hold. This was the testimony from all parts of the country.

A great many just common fellows, working together at one thing can do more than a few big fellows working all alone," announced a small lad returning panting from his games. Is not this the keynote of democratic citizenship?

Development in civic virtues on a supervised playground is rapid because the children are free to act and yet are guided away from the deterring pitfalls which might otherwise result from their own ignorance. The forming of self-governing organizations on grounds is the most efficient aid to these same ends.

The full breathing that comes with exercise in the sunshine is the surest preventive of disease, and the glad joy in the form of normal, happy, elevating social contact with one's peers banishes nervous disorder beyond the realm of childhood years.

Judge Lindsay's telegram to the convention, read as a parting word to the delegates—"Playgrounds more important in handling delinquency than juveniles

York's Police Force

HERE is a picture of the entire police force of York, Neb. It may be interesting to know that York's police force is represented only by Mr. Jonas Brewer, who stands six feet and five inches, and weighs 300 pounds. He will run 100 yards, or carry a couple of guns and two cartridge belts, loaded full, with carrying a dog. The entire force of York, a beautiful city of 7,500 people in which there is no saloon. During Mr. Brewer's administration for the last five years there has been no house or store burglary, no holdups nor shooting affrays. About the only arrests made are drunks who slip in pulped by express. Those who have been pulped claim that they are helpless when York's chief gets a hold on them.



JONAS BREWER.

courts"—may be given as concise statement of consensus of expert opinion as to the preventive scope of directed play.

More Than Mere Exercise.

Play is not merely physical exercise, but through its imitative and creative phases easily leads to the culture of aesthetic and highly spiritual life on the one hand, and the industrial plays on the other.

Mr. Stewart refers to the period beyond the kindergarten as the kindervet, where the children use their hands in working out ideas of weaving, molding, carving, constructing, etc., in ways most satisfac-

tory to themselves, thus leading through "play-work" to the skill and knowledge, the concentration and power necessary for work proper.

As this Aladdin rubbed his lamp, a beautiful vision arose—a school house, adequate, inviting, open nights, Saturdays and Sundays, vital and functioning, from basement reading rooms and gymnasium to well-lighted roof play grounds (for crowded cities), but with letter school only three hours per day; with vacation school started before the "fishing becomes good," and so adjusted to meet boys' needs, that they will know enough to stay in school.

(Mr. Joseph Lee of Boston says that

chief cause of truancy is that "boys know too much to go to school.")

The play of the child, then, with all its tremendous vital initiative force, shall form a complete bridge over to the work of the man. Surely, then, we shall no more be twitted that "we lack efficiency, not capital pleasures; not good, keen, present interests," and courage to live joyous lives."

Play Festival.

The play festival whose unique success was due very largely to the untiring efforts of Miss Amalie Hofer of Chicago com-

mions was far more than a mere exhibit. As an exhibit it would have been a common, pitiful thing, but it was a play festival. Children came representing their school or group and played out their little part with alacrity. The kindergarten children came from several neighboring schools and marched and played their ring games. There were the simple games of the school grounds and many kinds of ball for both boys and girls; there was stilted and climbing and swinging stunts; pieces of many kinds, and fees both old, familiar and new and strange. Miss Hofer of New York led twenty-four young women in folk dancing on the ground; 100 young girls in "gym" costumes exhibited the Inverness reel to the hapless wheezing melodies. The Swedish national dances in costume were most interesting, as was the Bohemian "Bambala." Perhaps the best of all was the folk dance by native Lithuanian women in costume. This was a genuine heart contribution to a grand occasion. Not all of the women were young, and some of them neither slender nor beautiful, but with dignity and ease, chanting their own rhythmic accompaniment, they showed the citizens of their adopted land the dance that generation after generation their fathers in the far away home land had helped, through the joyous outpouring of their own lives, to make more beautiful and complete.

A. E. Winslip, veteran educationalist, witnessed this number with oft repeated expressions of satisfaction and approval. The social and aesthetic as related to the teacher are the themes upon which Mr. Winslip has delighted and enlightened Omaha audiences. W. N. Hartman, perhaps the best known masculine kindergarten authority now living, watched the scene with great zest. It was in fact an occasion of peculiar significance to all educators, especially disciples of Froebel.

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HARRIETT H. HELLER.

Gleanings From the Story Teller's Pack

GENERAL Lawton's division was marching back to El Paso, there to take up a new position in the morning. General "Joe" Wheeler, in company with Major Creighton Webb, was standing at the edge of the road, watching the troops file past. Just as dawn was breaking a colored regiment came in sight. It gave evidence of being unusually tired.

Lawton's attention had been attracted to a corporal of the Twenty-fifth infantry, a great six-foot negro, in addition to a couple of guns and two cartridge belts, loaded full, was carrying a dog. The soldier to whom the other gun belonged was limping beside his comrade. Lawton halted the men. "Here, corporal," he called to the six-foot negro, "haven't you marched all night?" "Yes, sir," said the corporal, saluting. "And fought all day?" "Yes, sir."

"Then," asked the general, "why are you carrying a dog in addition to your other burdens?" "General," said the negro, with a grin that showed every one of his twenty-two teeth, "the dog's tired!"—Success Magazine.

Enforced Politeness.

A German woman was not long ago watching a workman as he put up new window fixtures in her house. "Don't you think that you have placed those fixtures too high?" asked she, having reference to the curtain rails just put in place. The workman, a stolid German, made no reply, but continued to adjust the fixtures. "Didn't you hear my question?" demanded the lady of the house. "How dare you be so rude!" Whereupon the German gulped convulsively, and then replied in the gentlest of voices: "I haf my mouth full of sawdust, and I could not speak till I swallow some!"—Harper's Weekly.

Stonewall's Bridge Builder.

"Stonewall Jackson," said a Virginia veteran, "used to tell a good story about a bridge builder. 'This bridge builder was called old Miles. He was very necessary to Jackson because the flimsy bridges on the line of march were continually being swept away by the floods or destroyed by the enemy; and in these contingencies Miles was a regular jewel. He could run you up a bridge in the time it would take another man to make the measurements. 'One day the union troops burned a bridge across the Shenandoah. Stonewall Jackson called old Miles to him and said: 'You must put all your men to work, Miles, and you must keep them at it all night, for I've got to have a bridge across this stream by morning. My engineer will draw up the plans for you.' 'Well, early the next morning, Jackson very much worried, met old Miles. 'See here,' he said, dubiously, 'how

about that bridge? Did the engineer give you the plan?' "Old Miles took the cigar from his mouth and flicked the ash off with a sneer. "General," he said, "the bridge is done. I dunno whether the picher is or not."—Washington Star.

Upholding Scripture.

The guilt of the man was so evident that the lawyer for the defense merely said: "I shall make no argument, but only call the attention of the jury to the scripture which reads: 'Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at him.'" In ten minutes the jury returned a verdict of "Not guilty."

Porter's Quick Wit.

Not long ago one of the chiefs of the post officials—the general manager, so it is said—of a certain important railway alighted at a little junction station away in the heart of the country. The railway dignitary was returning alone from a flaring expedition, and was well burdened with luggage of various kinds.

The porter at this station proved a perfect paragon and waited upon the traveler with the utmost possible politeness. He immediately gathered altogether all the traveler's traps and said that he would look after them well until the departure of the branch train, when he would see that they were duly handed over to their owner. Impressed with the porter's alacrity and courtesy, the general manager handed him a fairly good tip, which was accepted with expressions of gratitude and evident pleasure. After a little while the official went up to the porter and introduced a conversation.

"I say, my man, do you happen to know who I am?" he inquired. "Indeed, I don't, sir; I haven't the slightest idea," was the ready reply. "Well, I'm the general manager of this railway, and I suppose you know that there's an order in your book which speaks in the plainest possible terms against taking tips from passengers." "Begging your pardon, sir," repounded the quick-witted porter, "it says we are not to take gratuities from the public, but there's nothing in the rule book at all against our taking such a gift from a fellow servant."—New York Times.

The Real Thing.

Two women were discussing some new neighbors who had moved into one of the most sumptuous houses in their city. "They seem to be very rich," said the first. "Oh, they are," said the second. "Shall you call?" "Decidedly." "You are sure, are you, that they are—

quite correct, quite—er—good form?" "Oh, my dear, I'm positive," said the second woman. "They have thirty servants, eighteen horses, twelve dogs, eleven automobiles and one child."—Philadelphia Ledger.

His Business.

A Boston lawyer, who brought his wit from his native Dublin, while cross-examining the plaintiff in a divorce trial, brought forth the following: "You wish to divorce this woman because she drinks?" "Yes, sir."

"Do you drink yourself?" "That's my business"—angrily. Whereupon the unmoved lawyer asked: "Have you any other business?"—Everybody's Magazine.

He Was Satisfied.

An automobile dashed along the country road, relates the Youth's Companion. Turning a curve, it came suddenly upon a man with a gun on his shoulder and a weak, sick-looking dog beside him. The dog was directly in the path of the motor car. The chauffeur sounded his horn, but the dog did not move—until he was struck. After that he did not move.

The automobile stopped and one of the men got out and came forward. He had once paid a farmer \$10 for killing a calf that belonged to another farmer. This time he was wary. "Was that your dog?" "Yes, sir."

"You own him?" "Yes."

"Looks as if he'd killed him." "Certainly looks so." "Very valuable dog?" "Well, not so very." "Will he satisfy you?" "Yes."

Only a Decision.

In a jury trial in New York recently the attorney for the defense started in to read to the jury from a certain volume of the supreme court reports. He was interrupted by the court, who said: "Colonel—It is not admissible, you know, to read law to the jury." "Yes, I understand, your honor; I am only reading to the jury a decision of the supreme court."—Philadelphia Ledger.

"This is Him."

Not in a thousand years will blood forget blood, even in this great nation of ours. The column has been winding all morning through open country. Now it was approaching close woodland and high grass. The captain of the company, noting

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Revived by a Thirst.

Edward Beck of Lander, a Wyoming sheep herder, sat up in his coffin and called for a drink of whisky thirty-six hours after what was believed to have been his death and just as his funeral was about to be held. No doctor examined Beck's body after his supposed death, but friends who examined it saw no signs of life, and, believing he was dead, made a crude coffin, put the remains in it and arranged to bury them. His supposed death occurred on the range, where he was herding sheep, and the funeral was to be held at a sheep camp. A number of men who knew Beck were gathered about the coffin and one of them was about to read a passage from the Scriptures, when Beck sat up and called for a drink. He said he had not felt sick before losing consciousness, and, save slight dizziness, felt no ill effects from his death-like sleep. He got the whisky.

Lost Memory Returns.

After a lapse of memory lasting four years Charles Brewin, the Burlington (N. J.) tailor who wandered away from home and family that length of time and was found recently working in a greying and cleaning establishment in Plainfield, suddenly came to himself on Sunday, June 30. Brewin, who is supposed to have been a sufferer from aphasia, which deprives its victims of memory antedating a certain time, had been unable to recall the incidents in his earlier life.

Dr. Buchanan, a Burlington Physician.

Dr. Buchanan, a Burlington physician, and his father, called upon Brewin. At sight of his father Brewin started, "something broke in his head," as he put it, and a flood of light illumined the past. He thought he had left home the day before and spoke of events which took place at the time of his disappearance as though not more than twenty-four hours had intervened. He asked for members of his family and begged to be taken to them at once.