

The SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE SECTION

A Magazine for your Reading Table

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS' PAGE

I

T HAS been estimated that the money value to society of the average human life is about two

thousand nine hundred dollars. On this basis, our vital assets could be reckoned at, roughly, two hundred and fifty billion dollars. Against this, set the one hundred and ten billions of dollars at which the physical wealth of the United States is figured, and even the most arrant materialist will admit that the conservation of human life is more important than the conservation of forests or the eradication of diseases among cattle and hogs.

The most promising field for conserving life and health is the unformed and still plastic child. Tariff-making, coinage, banking and such are comparatively incidental issues in this fundamental problem of raising the physical, mental and moral level of the next generation. This leads us directly to the teacher and the school-room.

Wholesome habits of living cannot be legislated into men and women, but the health habits of the young can certainly be influenced and foreshaped. Medical inspection of schools, which began as a reflection of popular interest in matters of health, will end by becoming a most effective means for the attainment of a higher national vitality. "Medical inspection" has already become "health supervision" and the latter is rapidly including more effective methods of health teaching. The main purpose of health teaching is not so much to inculcate knowledge about diseases as to insure habits of living which will enable children to escape diseases and inefficiency. The school hygiene of today is not the school hygiene of yesterday, but infinitely broader. It has earnestly attacked the whole problem of child welfare. And this is right, for there is no other institution through the agency of which we can come so near reaching all the children of all the people.

It would be rash to set any bounds to the school's possible contribution to this end. In its vocational instruction, play supervision, moral education, health examination, school feeding, and medical and dental clinics, the school has once for all cut loose from its moorings to the three Rs.

It is foolish and short-sighted to suppose that greater care and activity on the part of the schools in these matters will undermine the parental sense of responsibility, as some think. Instead, it seems to be a universal law that the greater the interest which society takes in the child the more the parental interest is stimulated.

The Heavy Toll of Disease

THE school must not think of children merely in terms of what they are. It must consider also their probable future. Now barring the possibility of some great medical discovery which



Dr. David

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A CRUSADE FOR TWENTY MILLION SCHOOL CHILDREN

By David Starr Jordan

Chancellor of Leland Stanford University

Some 2,000,000 (ten per cent) are suffering from a grave form of malnutrition; 10,000,000 (fifty per cent) have enough defective teeth to interfere seriously with health; at least 2,000,000 (ten per cent) suffer from obstructed breathing due to adenoids or enlarged tonsils; probably 2,000,000 (ten per cent) have enlarged cervical glands which need attention, many of these being tuberculous; 4,000,000 (twenty per cent) have defective vision; over 1,000,000 (five per cent) have defective hearing; about 1,000,000 (five per cent) have spinal curvature or some other deformity likely to interfere with health; not far from 500,000 (two and one-half per cent) have organic heart disease; and at least 1,000,000 (five per cent) are predisposed to some other form of

will eradicate the disease, the certain fate of some two million of our school children will be to die an early death of tuberculosis. This is many times the number that will die of smallpox, diphtheria, scarlet fever and typhoid combined. Of the girls who die between the ages of ten and fifteen years, tuberculosis takes one-third. Too often tuberculosis steals the boy while teachers wrangle over rival methods of teaching him grammar or spelling. It is one of the functions of school hygiene to discover means of aborting this tragedy.

Consider that at least 10,000,000 of our school children (fifty per cent) are or have been infected with tuberculosis, while other diseases claim a large toll.

To grapple with this great and grave problem leading educators will convene at Buffalo next month in the Fourth International Congress On School Hygiene.

Sex Hygiene For All

ANOTHER great need is the teaching of sex hygiene. This is not only one of the most important, but one of the most difficult and embarrassing duties of the teacher. The end in view is to make certain elementary ideas common property of all intelligent people; to make them a matter of course, to be used unconsciously as a basis of conduct.

So long as information of this kind is forbidden knowledge, or knowledge to be obtained on the sly, so long will the danger of sex perversion exist.

It is especially important that teachers be trained to take the biological point of view. The task of molding a human life can only be accomplished by an appeal to those biological processes common alike to animals and to man. Therefore, teachers may be expected to familiarize themselves, for example, with the laws of growth, the order of physiological maturity, the causes of mortality and morbidity, the relations between physical and mental conditions and the causes of fatigue. When we have accepted this point of view we shall cease to raise up phantoms for children to fear in their groping ignorance.



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