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ALIAS HYGIENE¹

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Hygiene "is an ancient art. Some of its most important precepts formed a part of the wisdom of the Egyptians . . ." thirty-five hundred years ago. Hippocrates wrote a "treatise on airs, waters, and places" over twenty-three hundred years ago and recorded in perpetuity certain valuable information that was even then a thousand years old. Over seven hundred years ago the Code of Health from the School of Salernum (1200 A. D.) assembled many facts on hygiene that are in harmony with modern scientific information. The Code passed through more than 200 editions and "For over two hundred years it appears to have been the most popular book in existence."

Since Hygia, the Goddess of the preservation of health, was worshipped in the temples of her husband or father, Aesculapius, in that wonderful era of hellenic civilization which the later modern world has failed in so many respects to surpass or even equal, there has come into the affairs of mankind an increasingly large number of discoveries and applications that relate to hygiene. One might say that Hygia has now so many children that she does not know them all or that the religion of Hygia has broken up into many sects that know each other not. For today the world has many arts and sciences that have an unrecognized or unappreciated relationship with hygiene. The multiplication of the sub-divisions of hygiene with their scientific bases, their dramatic importances and their far-reaching influences on the economic and social life of the people has obscured the great conception of antiquity. Today the average individual thinks of hygiene as a matter of cleaning his fingernails, washing his face or shampooing his scalp. Such health achieving and health preserving enterprises as eugenics, prenatal care, care of the baby, child hygiene, medical inspection, play, athletics, physical training, safety-first, medicine, surgery, dentistry, nursing, the feeding of an army and the recreation of a camp are not ordinarily recognized as aliases of hygiene.

¹ Presented before the American Child Hygiene Association, Section on School Age and Adolescence, Asheville, N. C., November 11, 1919.

Hygiene is the science and the art of the preservation of health. The sciences of hygiene are those sources of information from which we secure accurate data as to the agents that injure health, the contributory causes of poor health, the carriers of disease, the defenses of health and the producers of health.

The arts of Hygiene are concerned with the applications of the sciences of hygiene to the health needs of the individual, to the health needs of groups of interdependent individuals and to the health needs of associations of interdependent groups.

I need cite only a few examples to recall to you convincingly the ramifications of the scientific sources, and the practical applications of hygiene.

Between 35,000 and 75,000 persons lose their lives every year because of accidents. These accidental deaths are largely due to mechanical, physical or chemical causes. The mechanical, physical and chemical injuries of war are still fresh in our memories. Hygiene must include a consideration of the mechanical, physical and chemical agents that injure health.

The pathogenicity of certain bacterial, certain protozoan and certain higher animal parasites has opened a large field for a great variety of scientific investigations relative to the living agents that injure health.

The history of the Jukes and of the Kallikack families establishes heredity as a very important division of hygiene.

The relation of physiology to hygiene is obvious. As a matter of fact normal health is a product of normal physiology and abnormal health is a product of disturbed physiology.

The fact that there are approximately 75,000 deaths from cancer annually in this country and that there were over 6,000,000 deaths from influenza last Fall in all countries and the fact that we know very little about the cause or the transmission of either of these diseases indicates that there are important fields of scientific research in hygiene that are as yet undeveloped and perhaps as yet not even identified.

The influence of the economic and social status upon health is obvious. Money can buy a certain amount of health. The individual, the family and the community that has resource and uses it wisely can buy protection from disease and can provide for effective constructive hygiene.

Our rather recently acquired knowledge of disease carriers—insects, animals and humans—has added some tremendously important scientific information to general hygiene and opened up great fields for research. I need only remind you of such insects as the mosquito, the flea, the fly and the body louse

and you will immediately recall their relationship to disease. Only the most painstaking and varied entomological investigations have made it possible for us to understand the part these carriers play in the dissemination of disease and have made it possible for us to develop defenses against them.

Along with our greatly increased information concerning the scientific, economic and sociologic facts of hygiene, there has come also a much larger variety of conditions for the applications of those facts for the acquisition, conservation and defense of human health.

While our expertly qualified agencies are searching for further truth from the sciences of general hygiene, other agencies are engaged in distributing the information that we already have for the better information and education of our people.

We have agencies that are working to reach the individual in order to educate and inform him concerning protective hygiene, preventive hygiene, remedial hygiene and constructive hygiene.

Other agencies are engaged with the group for the purpose of informing and educating the home group, the school group, the occupation group, and the great public institutional group. And still other agencies are concerned with intergroup hygiene in the rural community, the village, the city, the county, the state and the nation.

This organization, The American Child Hygiene Association, contacts all these phases of hygiene. It must be concerned with the acquisition of a greater amount and more accurate information concerning the agents that injure health, contributory causes of poor health, carriers of disease, the defenses of health, and the producers of health.

It must be concerned with the education and information of the individual. It must be concerned with the hygiene of the home, the school, the factory and the institution. It must be concerned with the hygiene of the rural, city, state and national communities. It seems to me self-evident that our greatest progress in health will come when the interrelations of the thousand and one agencies in hygiene are recognized and brought into an active team cooperation. This section on School Age and Adolescence has much in its field that is intimately in common with the organizations that are concerned with mental hygiene, eugenics, prenatal care, the hygiene of childbirth, the hygiene of infancy, provisions for play and recreation, medical inspection, physical training, athletics, school hygiene, domestic, family or home hygiene, industrial

or occupational hygiene, institutional hygiene, rural hygiene, city hygiene, state hygiene and national hygiene.

Thirteen states have enacted laws, more or less satisfactory, on physical training for their public schools. The work of this section is essentially the same as that covered by a modern program in physical training. There is a national agency in the field that is concerned with influencing other states to enact laws requiring physical training in the schools. The object of that organization and the object of this organization are identical.

There is a powerful campaign on now for the suppression of prostitution. I saw a record the other day of a little girl, who, at the age of 13 years, had spent two years of her life as a commercial prostitute. There are states in this country in which the age of consent is as low as 14 years. These are problems of School Age and Adolescence.

We have a national organization that is engaged in improving the instruction of teachers, another one that is concerned with better training of teachers of physical education. Both of them need all the support you can give them—and you need all the success they can achieve.

We have various governmental agencies that under different names are concerned with hygiene; one of those agencies, The United States Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board, is organizing and applying its governmentally derived powers for the vigorous and co-operative emphasis of the tremendously important fact that hygiene, in its composite structure—with all its aliases—carries a resource in health information, health education, health defense, health conservation, and health acquisition that is competent to increase enormously man power and woman power, the most precious assets of a nation.

It would be easy to multiply references to good players that should be on a powerful, and as yet unorganized, national hygiene team; if it were possible to organize the plays, formulate the signals and perfect the team, there could be no such thing as defeat.