of milk and a barrel of water." And I really believe he could.

One of the graduate students asked me the other day when and how I should give water to an infant, and I answered both questions with one word, "always."

DR. FRITZ B. TALBOT: I am glad that Dr. Howell spoke of pyelitis, because I should have put that in. It is important to wash out these pus cells that accumulate in the pelvis of the kidney, because if you don't wash them out they block up and result in an increase in fever.

I feel that if this subject that I have presented will make all the men see that the nurses keep a record of the amount of water ingested during illness and will not merely look at the chart, that I have accomplished a great deal, because I know that if you will look at the record of water ingested, you will be perfectly astounded to find that a number of children who, you think, are getting enough, have been getting minimum amounts of water; that is the reason many of the children do not do well in some of these serious illnesses.

CAUSE AND PREVENTION OF OVERSTIMULATION OF THE MODERN AMERICAN CHILD.

BY ERIK ST. J. JOHNSON, M.D., NEW BEDFORD.

"PROTECT, watch over, discipline and guide, those who have not yet attained sufficient age and experience to distinguish what is expedient for their own greatest individual interests."

This maxim, which perhaps expresses the greatest desire of the vast majority of healthy parents in normal homes, instinctive in most of Nature's kingdoms, coincides in the "Human Kingdom," with the "survival of the fit," and as such has been and is being, aided in every possible way by the universal spread of scientific knowledge, and system, permitted and backed up by the law and order of civilization. Under such a regime, the civilized, law-abiding nations of the earth, despite a clear understanding that its inhabitable surface is limited, look for a constant yearly increase of population, and hence a gain in strength and prestige, through the rearing of healthy normal children. Every now and then, whether it is Nature's action and reaction, or the operating of the eternal laws described by Malthus, human beings of one country or another (history repeats itself, the authorities say), kick over the traces, and in their apparent thirst for gain or power, fancied grievances, or something entirely new, cause conditions of strife, discontent and eco-

nomie unrest, which in every way interferes with and seriously checks the establishment and progress of normal families and home life.

Against such eras of destruction and upheaval, operate the forces of parental devotion, special medical knowledge, social service, federal, state and municipal aid, combined with charities, organized and individual. These forces are presumably trying hard to supplement each other and work together, far greater results as regards welfare of home and children being attained and made possible by such co-operation.

So effective have been these efforts for unity in England, that infant mortality was actually reduced during the years 1916, 1917, and 1918, the more strenuous years of the war, in that country, to a lower figure than during the immediately previous years of peace. It would appear to be a lack of realization of what is most expedient, or distortion of proportional values, which further interferes with and temporarily blocks the unity of forces aforesaid, and decreases their efficiency.

In our own country and state, the forces for promotion of children's welfare have accomplished magnificent and wonderful work. You are all more or less familiar with the widespread diffusion of special knowledge of children through channels clinical, religious, municipal, and social. The more of this kind of work there is done, the more there seems to appear to do, and the large sums of money necessary have flowed in most generously, through avenues of public and private appeal.

Now it would certainly seem that at present, in this country, there is opportunity to give every child a chance for well-balanced health, education, and satisfactory progress in its contest for the right to existence. But though the medical men are checking and preventing organic disease, though our associations, public and private, are constantly weeding out the unfit, and though schools for mind and body are better than they ever were, there arises a gigantic monster which, like the Pestilence, or any of Nature's former checks on population, seems tending to disrupt these wondrous efforts, and seriously block their progress in the maintenance of normal homes necessary for the welfare of normal children.

In the *Boston Herald* of March 28, 1920, editorial section, page one, there is an article giving official figures and reports of the central

police station. In commenting on the disappearance of 38,000 girls in the United States in one year's time, since March 1, 1919, of which number 323 are recorded in the city of Boston, the writer attempts to classify and get at the original fundamental causes. As one would naturally suspect, unsatisfactory homes and discontent therefrom are most prominent; but in trying to go a little further, and reasoning on the restless discontent in a country that is sufficiently prosperous to promote general happiness, three prominent headings strike one's eye:

1. Modern youth and childhood overstimulated. The modern girl and modern boy as well is over-stimulated from the outside.

2. Large proportion of blame placed on the "Movies" or motion pictures.

3. Need of a school for "Parenthood," modelled on one that exists in Belgium.

These statements are from reliable sources, and in a Boston paper, but many protests of a like nature are to be found in publications representing many of our principal cities and localities. Now, whether this condition of unrest and discontent was caused chiefly by the war, or increased prosperity and ambition, or by overstimulation from life in general, matters little. I believe it is generally agreed upon that the latter condition (overstimulation) is rampant among our children today, and being exceedingly difficult for most people to cope with, it is perhaps nullifying to a large extent the splendid work done during past and present time by promoters of children's health.

The evils of overstimulation of the human organism, from a physical point of view, even when the causes are entirely psychic, are too well known by the authorities on physiology and psychoneurology (being largely circulatory and nutritional) to take up your time with. Suffice it to say, that a distinctly temporary or acute disturbance in the normal balance of secretions of the thyroid, pituitary body, suprarenals and gonads, causing mild interference with the sensitive physiological functions of children, may actually today partake of the nature of a habit, on account of the continual presence of the exciting causes.

Now, everyone who has a real knowledge of children, and many who have not, have discoursed on the evils of the candy habit. That is a tangible concrete affair, while laboratories have made perfectly patent the ill effects of

an overproportion of sugar in concentrated form as a continuous part of the diet of childhood and youth. Now it ought to be an easy matter to convince a parent who knows that excess of candy is deleterious to child health, excess of stimulation is quite as antagonistic, if not more so, because the children have more ways of receiving the latter through apparently normal channels than the former, rendering the habit easier to form and harder to break off than the "candy" habit. It is therefore my desire to interest our professional brethren, from the point of view of the specialist in both "pediatrics" and "neurology," in the fact that though the condition of overstimulation is apt to be complex, the causes are fairly clear and certainly easier for the average parent to comprehend than the reasons for chemistry of childhood metabolism or the micro-organisms which must be contested in preventing and overcoming organic infections. Consequently, why should not the causes of excess stimulation be taken up in more concrete ways, demonstrated, classified, and warned against, just as much as errors in nutrition, enlarged tonsils, and respiratory infections? Until a comparatively recent date, these evils of excess stimulation in childhood were manifested only among idle rich, so-called. Today they would appear to threaten a very large number of the constitutionally fit children of our population, which is indeed a serious matter. It is true that nature arms the normal parent or child most admirably, in selective instinct, as to what is good and what is bad. The difficulty regarding the quantity and quality of pleasurable excitement or mental stimulus a child, or children in general should have is selective proportion, in order to attain the moderate degree which is beneficial to health, and to avoid the excess which tends to destroy and break down. Along these lines I believe modern children need your help and need it badly.

Some of us have felt for a number of years that like the subject of instruction in sex hygiene, the teaching of proportional values of mental stimulation and excitement for growing children has been avoided, except in rare individual cases, and being rather complex in its nature, left generally to parents and circumstances. While free to admit that the subject is complex, it would appear to be intimately related, so far as preventive measures are concerned, to cultivation of self-discipline and a

contented attitude towards greater simplicity in life. Can not much be accomplished in urging the profession, special and general, to take up the causes in a systematic way, and endeavor to show at the same time the methods of elimination on the ground that such affairs are a real menace to present and future health in childhood and youth. Mr. Herbert Hoover and the Massachusetts State Commission on the high cost of living have at different times most earnestly recommended greater efforts to simplify life, in order to stabilize American economies as a matter of future self-preservation for us all. May not we, as authorities in whom parents place trust for the safety of their children, rub it in everywhere we go that an elimination of the causes of excessive stimulation of children would not only add much to success in promotion of their health in general, but also give a vitally important boost to the resumption of the normal workings of the laws of economics, so necessary to the production and maintenance of the safe and sane homes?

It is true that each of the aforesaid causes might in itself form the subject of a paper or discussion. My purpose is more to call attention to the fact of these evils, which are operative mainly through discrepancies in sense of proportion for youthful work and play. Like candy, most of the causes infer commercial profit on a large scale, and if correctly and intelligently used, are capable of affording much benefit. But also, like candy, experience has proved that where financial opportunity exists, the majority are apt to abuse, and it becomes a question whether it is not far easier to form the habit of none at all, than just the proper amount at the proper time.

Now, as regards the aforementioned factors or causes of excessive stimulus to the modern American child, these may be classed under six main headings:

a. First, the automobile; a modern marvel of mechanical skill, which has brought, and is today bringing, increased fresh air and opportunities for quick change of great benefit to children. Quite true; but what about the speed, the dust, the complex delicate machinery and the ever increasing cost? What of the engendered restless discontent or the unconscious strain of the undeveloped neuropsychic mechanism to absorb and digest, the rapidly moving train of interesting wonders the motor

car necessarily brings up. It inculcates a desire not only for exciting changes at too quick intervals, but also for complex artificial rivalries, occupations, diversions and entertainments, creating dissatisfaction with the simpler and more health giving home pursuits, and in time actually eliminating these from the child's mental horizon.

As further evidence, observe the present trend of action among children as regards sailing, rowing, and motor boating. There is not nearly so much natural, purely healthful recreation when once the motor boats are dominant. But there is a great deal more tension and excitement. Children, with rarely endowed exceptions, no longer care to sail or row. Such things are too slow. They are no longer interested in the beauty of the water, the sunset, and the ways of the wind. Even the moonlight on a gently flowing tide, or river, has yielded its fascination to that of machinery, with its grease and noise. We are all for speed. What time did we make and what is the power of the engine, are the all absorbing points. One is forced into the idea that the whole expedition is a proving of mechanical efficiency for business or war, rather than a glimpse at healthful recreation.

Well, you would not prevent children from riding in their parents' automobiles? No, but it is the candy proposition over again, and a matter of proportion. Encourage the youngster to walk, or ride a bicycle, rather than desire to frequent motors, which are bad for the best Nature has to give us. Represent the motors as purely business necessities, with which the child's acquaintance should be as brief as possible until he reaches an age which enables him to hold a license. Surely such things are possible, and a much more natural and contented children's existence would result, especially for those whose people cannot afford motors, as they will not be constantly compared with children who appear to own them.

The second heading in listing of aforesaid causes considers:

b. Machine-made music and modern dancing. As an ardent lover of music, both vocal and instrumental, I must admit to having very much enjoyed such mechanical triumphs as the graphophones and auto playelles, electric and otherwise. I believe many people did, when these machines were first made convenient for

general use. The eventual result, so far as children are concerned, seems most unfortunate. Instead of agreeable genuine music and rhythmic graceful dancing, the chief factors are speed and excitement, slightly checked on occasions by novelty or fashion. The mere ability to indulge in any sort of music and dancing, at any hour, seems to foster artificial tastes and supreme indifference to anything which fails to promote further excitement. The children are soon rendered too lazy to make any real effort at producing music themselves. Or if one individual has the talent or desire, it is promptly overcome, as the rest always prefer the ease and convenience of the quicker zest and infinite power of variation afforded by the perfection of mechanical reproduction.

The commercial aspect of these machines has, no doubt, helped to place music of wide range and variety within the reach of those who otherwise would have had no chance to hear it. But what, may I ask those of rational, evenly balanced temperament, is the ultimate and most natural "grand finale"? Is it not greater speed and more excitement in place of desire for or pleasurable knowledge of the music or dancing as an art, for social pleasure, or genuine benefit? The excess in quantity alone is enough to jar Longfellow's "Celestial Harmonies," as well as the psychic mechanism of childhood. One may not openly and utterly condemn musical machines, but children must be more restricted in their use and warned against excessive indulgence at any and all times. Otherwise before a child has had a chance to develop his physique he is in imminent danger of developing "nerves," which the fond parents are soon made aware of, after the damage is done.

c. Third cause, or group, includes motion pictures and theatres. These hold out many attractions, especially arranged for children, and if handled with care and judgment, may turn out wonderfully beneficial, from the educational and recreative point of view. Some of us recollect the tuneful music and essentially clean, witty lines of Gilbert and Sullivan's classics, and of the "1492" of the First Corps Cadets of Boston, as most delightful moments of childhood's regime, when we were allowed to go once or twice a year. Now, unfortunately, the commercial aspect dominates and informs us that features which appeal to intensive sensational and emotional excitement pay the most. Let us

hope they will not continue to do so. Many people are apt to forget how difficult this same financial status was in the fight waged by our profession against "patent medicines" and the giant crackers and other dangerous explosives of previous anniversaries of our independence. Today it would seem to appear that this same commercial profit has greatly injured the nature of true sport in prize boxing and professional base ball, the amounts and figures of the money involved being the real excitement. It is not at all strange, in considering these necessary results, with regard to our coming generations, that efforts are now being made to establish certain rules and regulations for motion pictures. As in previous cases, the community as a whole, advised and backed by the medical profession, will endeavor to help parents protect their children from the dangers of excessive excitement.

d. Fourth cause, telephone. Another most necessary and mechanically delicate adjunct to modern life is the telephone. Originally intended as a business convenience and time-saver, it has become a universal dependence. Like the other complex machines, its excessive use tremendously increases the opportunities among children for prolonged continued action and stimulative excitement. What may be termed "telephone abuse," or improper, unnecessary use of the instrument, also adds no small amount to the strain and tension of existence. So far as a child's health is concerned, this factor could be adjusted by correct intelligent training when once the importance of the subject as a factor was called attention to; but if not, it is probable that elimination for a period would be the most effective way.

In this connection may I relate the recent experience of some most excellent families who for some years have taken their children, during the summer season, to Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, and places along the south side of the Cape. These people have ample means to afford a telephone, but they tell me, once accustomed to living without one, the children do not seem to mind, while the quiet repose and simplicity thus induced renders the home life far more natural and as it should be. The value of such a normal point of view with regard to the children's health, strength and resistance can hardly be overestimated. A happy life, with comparatively few complications and worries, has been the result of recognition of

factors producing over stimulation in the young and the possibility of prevention of the same.

This brings me to the last heading, expressed by.

e. Fifth cause of group, which takes up "Too early or excessive school competition in studies, athletics and social life." Having learned the priceless value of a name and reputation in the line of success, many of our modern schools, both public and private, are naturally anxious to outdistance their rivals in all departments. In this way the superiority of the school and how closely it can imitate a university or college, would appear to entirely overshadow the basic principles that rugged constitution or what might be termed primary health and strength, so essential before reaching the actual "front," are never built up or fostered in the feverish atmosphere of a too complex, overstrained or hurriedly advanced quota of knowledge.

This business of mere children straining every nerve and being so excited or thrilled over exaggerated desire to keep a certain standing in the class, or win over a certain rival in the athletic or social field, must eventually have but one result, as every fair minded medical man knows. The system of automatic, interdependent controls of the functions of the "nervous system," established by the ductless glands, falls into a vicious circle somewhat akin to that of "autointoxication" in the digestive system. One notices more and more that in the private schools boys and girls are being removed and advised to drop back a year to regain their "equilibrium," not on account of any other reason than lack of "vitality." Furthermore, we too frequently hear the complaint, "Why is my child so delicate? Why do children seem to lack the vitality which the boys and girls used to have?" My good friends, they have this vitality, and even more, but it is unfortunately being used up by the constant temptations to burn up nervous energy with which they are surrounded on every side. While it is perfectly true that some modern methods are protecting and conserving the nerve vitality of childhood more than ever before, other modern methods are virtually obliging the children to use up this storage energy a great deal faster than they can produce it with their overstimulated, complex little organisms.

A distinguished author, the late Washington Irving, in a favorite classic, clearly demonstrates this condition and later the deplorable results of its misapprehension. The text reads in this manner: "I could be wrought upon to a wonderful degree of anguish or delight. Everything affected me violently and as I grew older the feelings remained equally acute, being too easily transported into paroxysms of pleasure or rage. It was the amusement of my relations and the domestics to play upon this apparently irritable temperament. I was moved to tears, tickled to laughter, provoked to veritable fury, for the entertainment of the company, who were ever amused by such a tempest of mighty passion in a pigmy frame. They little thought, and perhaps little heeded, the dangerous sensibilities they were fostering, and thus I became a little creature of passion before reason was developed. Soon I was disliked by my teachers for the very lessons they had taught me."

The unfortunate subject of this latter discourse grew up to commit a murder, which he vainly regrets, offering as a cause which might have been understood and remedied, the fact that he had always lived in an overwrought atmosphere. His father, though of noble rank, was sadly ostentatious beyond his means, and therefore continually straitened in his pecuniary circumstances. Authorities inform us there are quite a few people in America today who are doing this sort of thing. Such a case is certainly a warning against the fallacy of children becoming "little brothers or sisters of the rich," so-called, or being raised in an atmosphere of "false prosperity." These things certainly favor all the causes of excessive stimulation, if not constituting an actual causal group in themselves.

That children need normal natural stimuli is well known and widely acknowledged. The *Eugenics Review* for April wisely reflects, "Every child is a motor organism surging to move and do things. It is eager to translate thought into action to relieve emotion by motion. Beside motor capacities, there come all too soon the senses, the feelings, the imagination, the possibilities for control and initiative. In addition to fundamentals like food and air, the developing as well as growing organism require a succession of liberating stimuli," These "liberating stimuli," however, should be as nearly natural as possible and not unduly

continued or prolonged. Originally I take it, they were direct results of a closer contact with the scenes and forces of Nature and therefore controlled by Nature's checks. They were the sort of stimuli which cultivated self-discipline and fostered conservation of power, rendered experience fruitful and engendered repose during periods of inaction. One can hardly apply these attributes to the distinctly up to date "liberating stimuli" of youth and childhood. The main purpose of this paper is to indicate that the quantity and quality of such stimuli should be definitely classified, known of, and warned of, in their relations to children's health, as successfully as have been the proteids, carbohydrates, and fats, in relation to matters of diet and nutrition.

My eminent and reverend friend, Howard N. Brown, of King's Chapel, Boston, in one of his recent sermons stated that people are becoming so taken up with big problems of a world-wide nature they are wilfully neglecting to take sufficient interest to do well their smaller work as individuals. I take it the "woman's rights" movement, from which some of us expected great things, does not in any way appear to be increasing the scientific efficiency and labor-saving methods in the smaller or larger normal household. Those poor little primary affairs of economic and wholesome food well cooked, washing and laundry work, efficiently and reasonably done, amusements essentially non-extravagant and homelike in character, all these, on which rest the "king pins and bolts" of all the larger structures and accomplishments of society in all nations, would be made to appear as mere drudgeries, narrowing and distasteful to the modern point of view. Possibly the routine, every-day quality of such occupations has taken away the realization on the part of many that these primary every-day affairs form the bulwarks of healthy children in natural homes and, as Dr. Holmes once remarked, like a good pair of mammary glands, cannot be replaced or made up for by any amount of science and mechanics.

During the latter period of the recent war, every one admits, the Americans showed plenty of courage, abounding nerve, and ability to fight well. But the number of purely nervous breakdowns, considering the short time we were in action, has been remarked with some surprise by the statisticians. It may have been the unprecedented speed with which we were obliged

to prepare; but it also may have been an indication of personalities having previously lived in association with speed, tension and excessive excitement, with a consequent habitual craving for the same. If this be true, what of our future generations? Are they no more to be endowed with solid, enduring, efficient nerve qualities like those of the supreme commander of the allied main front? Marshal Foch of the French Republic, on being asked what was the greatest "thrill" he ever felt, replied that he did not know what "thrills" were and had no time for them. Such leaders are not built up from overstimulated childhood, entertained by "ouija boards," and partial knowledge of their own subconscious selves, which affairs cannot be too strongly condemned.

SUMMARY.

The automobile, the motor boat, the graphophones, pianolas and cinematographs, together with wrongly proportioned extravagance in ambition and money, in schools and in homes, are all, in certain ways, seriously harmful to the existence and development of normal children. Chiefly so in that unless used with more than average care and forethought, they render children dissatisfied with normal home life. There, and there only, are laid the true foundations for natural strength and lasting qualities in mind and body. Though economic checks, such as the "high cost of living," and future shortage of gasoline, are bound to operate before long in the line of general stabilization, my present plea is that medical men should use every opportunity to warn present-day parents of the causes and evil, far-reaching results of overstimulation of children outside the home. Furthermore, that a less hurried, less lively, more simple existence, like that of some older nations, would appear to be what our children need most in order to build up staying, lasting qualities for further "international competition."

Take, for the sake of example, the lives, routine habits and customs of the younger children of the Scotch, English, Scandinavians, Danes, and Belgians. With our own greatly advanced scientific guides along the lines of physiology, pathology, nutrition, and hygiene, we should in the future render our American children as well qualified to fight for their existence as those of any nation or nations on earth.

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DISCUSSION.

L. E. EMERSON, PH.D., Cambridge: It is to me a great honor to have been asked to open the discussion on Dr. Johnson's paper, and I am very glad that Dr. Morse has corrected the mistake of the printer who inadvertently gave me an even greater honor with too little effort on my part. I am not an M.D., as he explained; I am only a doctor of psychology.

From a psychological point of view everything that Dr. Johnson has said is absolutely true, and I could not possibly add anything in the way of material or presentation except possibly in one respect, which will be to make it a little more schematic perhaps and to transform it into psychological terms. If we look at the child as a functioning organism in a group of organisms, that is, in society,—the child is stimulated and then reacts; overstimulation jams, to use a wireless telegraphy term, and the child is thrown into a state of excitement that may manifest itself in any form characteristic of that particular child.

Now it has been discovered recently that there is a psychological phenomenon previously suspected but not before well established, which has now received the term "repression." Under the circumstances of jamming, if the child or if anybody else is unable to transform the excitement that he receives, that excitement is repressed. Under those circumstances the repressed excitement takes up, more or less, an existence of its own in what for practical purposes of naming has obtained the name "complex." That term "complex" merely means something that is dynamic and is trying to get itself expressed in some form. Under those circumstances the organism, the child or the individual manifests symptoms. Now this affects the child in two ways,—either it prevents the child developing normally or it breaks down a development which has not become sufficiently well established to stand that strain. As an illustration of how it prevents a child developing, I may tell very schematically the case of a young girl whose father was one of the most brilliant public men probably that this country has ever produced, and under the stimulation of her father's brilliancy and her own home and public life, she attempted a similar brilliant attitude in school, more brilliant than true, which she characterized as her 8-year-old crime. It was simply that she falsified an ex-

amination paper and afterwards felt so badly about it that she was unable to talk to people because she thought they knew about it; she was unable to meet her parents and her friends because she thought they knew about it; she was unable to read a newspaper because she thought it was in the newspapers. She started in on a course that came very close to approaching dementia praecox for various reasons; one was the overstimulation of the parental activity, and the other was that the activity did not have an adequate form of expression.

Another instance of that sort of thing is illustrated by a child who in early age is overstimulated and breaks down from inadequate ability to meet the demands that the public puts on her. Such an instance was that of a young girl who, owing to the fact that her father was a drinking man, had to go to work at the age of 15 and was unable to do the work that was required of her. In other words, she was unable to transform the stimulations into forms, she was unable to transform the demands of the mechanism into which she was thrown into serviceable activity, and she started in with a St. Vitus dance sort of reaction, ending up in tics and finally into hysterical symptoms of various characters.

Now all this is schematized in the simple idea that emotions may be disassociated from their proper ideas and therefore find no possibility of expression because a normal emotion has got to be expressed through a normal idea normally associated with that emotion. If that emotion is not properly expressed or with the proper idea, it is disassociated and it becomes the complex that I have spoken of, and then it must manifest itself in some other form, which may be anything from a mild stammering, a slight hesitation in speech, a feeling of general neurasthenic unhappiness, or down to dementia praecox in one line, or to certain forms of reactions that have all the appearances of epilepsy in another line, or on another side if antisocial reactions are sufficiently strong, into all degrees of criminal reactions. From that point of view the inadequately expressed excitement may be criminal in one line or illness in the other.

The only thing that I wish to say in addition is again to express my sense of the honor you have done me in asking me to open the discussion on Dr. Johnson's paper and simply to say that psychologically and scientifically, everything he has said is absolutely true.

DR. ERIK ST. J. JOHNSON: I was glad to have this paper brought down to more definite scientific terms, for which I have to thank the gentleman who opened the discussion. It is from the psychoneurological point of view a complex subject, but is, practically speaking, a simple one, in that it applies to the every-day home life of all normal children. Some of us have felt for a number of years