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NOTES ON SCHOOL-LIFE HYGIENE*

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The suggestion that most people do not realize the shortcomings of the present school-system needs to be kept constantly in mind. The entire public-school system of the world is defective in many respects, pedagogical, physiological, and medical. For one thing, the child is hurried into school at too early an age. Children should be kept out of the school room altogether until eight years old (see below): Their greater efficiency thereby secured will easily enable them to make up the three lost years and much more of fundamental importance. The school hours and days are too long. The work is too extensive and not intensive enough. The instruction rendered is often defective; only about 10 per cent of the teachers are graduates of normal schools, which means that the instruction is given by amateurs, not by professional teachers. Why trust our children to amateurs? The instruction is given along the lines of tradition rather than in the light of science,—psychology and pedagogy. The pure natural interest of the child is not seized upon as a key to his psychophysical development as much as it should be. So much as a preface.

The particular hygienic points to be considered and kept in mind in these remarks are these: (1), The child must have abundant sleep; (2) abundant outdoor air; (3) much less fatigue than is now usual; (4) abundant and proper food; (5) abundant outdoor exercise and play; (6) entire freedom from care and worry; (7) information regarding sexual matters, and this early in life.

1. *Sleep.* From the point of view of many medical men neither children nor adults get enough natural sleep. The use of tea, tobacco, coffee, cocoa, etc., late in the afternoon, puts off the natural sleep-time an hour or more at least. Watch "Tabby" and "Towser" and see how they sleep and exercise—theirs is a good model of hygienic life in its physiologic aspects. In the early grades children should have eleven hours of sleep daily; and if they take proper, coarse,

*Remarks made (March, 1913,) to *The Parents' and Teachers' Association*, of Belmont, Massachusetts.

outdoor exercise they will get it, because sleepy at bed-time. In the grammar schools and afterwards ten hours of actual sleep should be the minimum. In the latter half of the high school there should be at least nine hours; say from nine until six, or from ten until seven. Another thing to remember is that when the child is passing through adolescence as much sleep is demanded as in the case of younger children. At the age of puberty the child is under a strain not present at any other time of life; necessarily this demands much sleep. The use of tea and coffee should be forbidden entirely, and the drinking and eating of cocoa and chocolate (they contain alkaloids too) should be vigorously discouraged towards evening, for they are distinctly stimulative and tend to keep children awake or make the sleep they do get light and partly unproductive of its proper recuperating effects. The normal child does best without stimulant of any kind whatever, habitually.

2. *Air.* There should be abundance of natural (outdoor) air indoors as well as out. During waking hours the child should be outdoors practically all the time. Sewell in his suggestive paper in a recent medical journal has given us a study of the effects of outdoor air on the human body—such as the friction of the wind, the moisture in the atmosphere, and the like. The skin is just as much an organ as the liver, the kidney or the arms and legs. One of its minor functions is respiration. In it are found six or eight kinds of sense organs of much importance. The moisture and the temperature of the moving pristine air have an effect which stagnant, artificially warmed and moistened air has mostly failed to give.

Technical educators, hygienists, physical educators, physiologists, and psychologists have strangely enough as yet failed to come together and approve the only ventilation-method known that is satisfactory to our modern ideas about mental work, freedom from fatigue, and tuberculosis—all three (and others) at once. The plan* is so extremely simple, hygienic, and natural, so inexpensive and common-sensible that it "seems too good to be true" in a complex and extravagant world. The notion is: *Open the windows.* This formula is indeed simple and the materials all at hand in every indoor school-room in the world: Systematically and continually open the windows for five minutes or so every half-hour whatever be the weather, and require the children to practice during that time whatever physical exercises may be best adapted

* See for a concise statement of this plan and its relations G. V. N. Dearborn: "Certain Physiologic Aspects of School Hygiene," *Education*, xxxi, 1, September, 1910, 34-43.

to the temperature outside and to the pupils' ages. This practice, of course, in principle is in vogue in many schools (e. g., those of New York City, in part), but nowhere as yet on the efficient scale, with the system, or with the beneficial effects here proposed. The present intent is to suggest its vigorous performance as a routine and important part of the regimen throughout every school-day in the year, as a part of the pupil's training in the several important respects concerned, and with the same enthusiasm and intelligence and originality of adaptation that the really good teacher affords her pupils in other respects.

Mental fatigue would be practically abolished; brain and muscles would derive all the benefits peculiar to frequent vaso-motor rearrangement; abundant real ventilation would be at last secured with natural, moving, living, outdoor air, vital with the essential qualities of the unharmed atmosphere; money enough would be saved in school-building construction to replace the amateur teachers with professionals; eye-strain and general kinesthesia-strain (seen as "the fidgets") would be avoided; children would become somewhat hardened to sudden changes of temperature and humidity; the toilet-rooms might be visited without disturbance of class-exercises; the pupils would get abundant muscular exercise taken under the least fatiguing conditions; the teachers would keep fresh and at their maximum efficiency. These nine are, perhaps, the most obvious of the benefits related to this plan. The only valid objection (that some children would take cold in very harsh weather in a cold climate) may be readily overcome by an intelligent adaptation of the method or by the segregation of the over-susceptible pupils until their mucous membranes became trained to ordinary outdoor conditions.

No child should sleep, of course, without two windows open every night—no matter what the outdoor circumstances.

This second point, then, is simply this: School-children must have abundant outdoor air indoors and out,—natural moving outdoor air, as nearly as possible under outdoor conditions.

3. *Fatigue.* The third notion is that there should be *less fatigue*: Every research emphasizes very strongly that the conclusion is correct that our school-children are often over-fatigued. Certain books because popular give the wrong point of approach entirely. Such books for example as "Little Men" and "Little Women" by their very titles alone have done a lot of harm, for they are large sellers and are found in every public library. They totally misrepresent the nature of the child, for the child is *not* a little man nor a little

woman. The child is different in almost every essential respect from men and women; different not only in mere quantity but in inherent quality.

The essential element of childhood which demands to be constantly kept in mind is undevelopment, immaturity, not merely as to stature and weight and strength, but as to tissue, as to every tissue-cell of the body. This is especially true and important of the nerve-cells: the neurons have not yet developed to their full size and strength. Therefore is it in part that the young child is incapable of training in the mental sense. It is quite impossible to physically train a child as a man may be trained to do things until he is 16 to 18 years old—largely because the muscle and other cells making up his body are not yet fully developed, but also because he lacks some of the chemical substances (hormones) necessary for the development of various parts of his body, a lack, of course, not apparent to observation, but now beginning to be understood. It is chiefly owing to this undeveloped condition of the billions of cells making up the child's body that the whole child fatigues so easily; and the teacher has always overestimated the strength of the child. The injuries of over-fatigue are cumulative; just as are the injuries from the continuous use of alcohol. A man can go on taking a drink or two of whiskey for months, and in some cases years, and not know that any injury has resulted; and then awake some morning, so to say, to find himself permanently disabled: his heart-action crippled, or his nerve-centers permanently diseased. So it distinctly is with fatigue. The child may run along with a small amount of over-fatigue each day for years and no result be apparent, perhaps, except in times of special stress and strain. Later on in life, however, in misfortune in some depressing illness, such as typhoid or pneumonia, in which the grown child needs a little surplus of nervous energy, he finds that he has not only no surplus to draw upon, but shows every sign of having a deficit of nerve-strength compared with the normal person. He has been working along below the standard of efficiency which would have been possible to him but for the over-fatigue of childhood which had prevented the proper development of the nerve-centers and cells. In all the different researches made in America, Europe, and Japan as to the effect of fatigue, the results were convincing. In school-work the fatigue always was measurable and considerable and the results cannot be doubted: namely, that our present school system is unduly fatiguing.

The practical point of the whole matter for immediate remedy is that study out of school before the age of fifteen

is entirely wrong from the physiological point of view. It is one of the defects of our school-system that children are allowed to study at their homes before that age. After about that time there is no reason why they should not do so to some extent. But if a school-system cannot teach a child what is necessary to be taught during five or six hours of the school day, there is something wrong about it. The fact that it is allowed betrays the general ignorance of childhood's nature in the first place, and the common lack of intensive efficiency in our school system in the second place. Prof. Berle of Tufts College has recently demonstrated the possibilities of intensive home-training, as his important little book relates. He shows how a child can be taught important things more intensively, that is, without spending so much misused time and routine effort. The Sidis system, so-called, and the Montessori system are directed along this same line—many such streams showing that we are spending too much time about our school system and not pushing hard enough in the thoughtful way meanwhile. School is, I repeat, for emphasis, too extensive and not sufficiently intensive. The quality of the study and not its quantity is the one important thing. The object of the school should be to teach the children how to think and become efficient and self-reliant and not merely how to accumulate more or less miscellaneous facts. Interested attention certainly affects the mind more usefully than any other mental means. It is the focus-power of the mind at its best. The child often acquires a great deal more mental efficiency from what he gets without knowing he is getting it, so to say, than he gets by the active, extensive study of books. And much of this more important part of the childhood education he will get outside of school if he has the right seeds of interest put into his mind during school hours.

Aside from all extraneous matters (expediency, convenience, etc.), it would undoubtedly be to the great advantage of the average child's ultimate welfare if he went to school for the first time during his ninth year. It remains for some genius-pedagogue to reconcile the diverse interests; meanwhile the actual child is not getting the best out of his developmental youth. The great chorus of parental voices asks, *What* shall we do with our children before the age of eight, if they should not be allowed to go to school till then? This matter of school-age, then, is distinctly and emphatically a matter of expediency: a matter of practical expediency and not of theoretical desirability. The average parent wants to get rid of the young child for a few hours each day, and the teacher is willing to help. This is not a theoretical condition at all. The

theoretical aspiration is to let the child run loose on a farm until eight or nine years old. Then one sees how rapidly he makes up by his greater efficiency in the acquisition of knowledge,—for he has a sound nervous system! As to children in the cities, strike a “happy medium” and have them go to school after the sixth year or seventh. There is always a golden mean. The “social life of the school” to the child under eight is not of sufficient advantage to offset the loss of nerve-building outdoor life.

On the Montessori-Berle plan the average child will learn to read and write long before eight years old if surrounded with people of average intelligence who are at all interested in him. My discussion is purely theoretical, as physiologist and psychologist, and as such my opinion is in the direction that the child much more than makes up mentally what schooling he has lost by beginning at eight or nine, and so far as his body is concerned he has obviously the great advantage, and mind and body are one. That is the ideal condition and may not always be practicable,—until the great light comes! Of course it would depend partly on what was done at school. Much outdoor work in gardens and nature-work and manual training would be distinctly in the right direction and in the nature of a compromise, looking toward the advantages of the ideal outdoor-life plan.

The broad general principles of the Montessori method is going to do great things and modify our school system. When applied in a large, rational outdoor way, the way we Americans believe in, it will assuredly have a good deal of influence on our American school system, for it contains some of the important essentials of the most advanced psychophysiology on which the pedagogy of the future must rest. We should take especial interest in this system because much of its “material” was devised by Edward Seguin and used in the education of the feeble-minded here in Massachusetts many years ago, as a brief visit to the sense-education department of the State School will promptly demonstrate. Since then Doctor Fernald has greatly developed this important system of education, and Maria Montessori has given it wide publicity.

Another thing that should be noticed by parents as well as teachers is the use of vacations. They should be absolute holidays. The essence of a holiday (Saleeby) is freedom from care. Yet some teachers take especial, almost fiendish, delight in giving out a lesson for a vacation to be ready at the beginning of the next unpleasant entertainment she has to offer. This is more than an unkindness to any child, for it not only

spoils the lesson but impairs the vacation as well. The vacation should be an absolute outdoor holiday whether it be three or four months or one day in length. The essential of it should be freedom from care. Mixing study and play spoils both.

This whole matter of fatigue is an extremely important one, but the phase of it I wish to drive home and impress is the ever imminent danger of over-fatigue. Because children do not appear fatigued is no sign that they are not so. Because the girl, urged on by youth, does not appear exhausted, is no token that her essential nerve-cells are not seriously fatigued. The child has such an effective surplus of energy that its obvious exhaustion day after day would mean nothing short of lasting physical incapacity. A good healthy, active boy who feels dead tired in a *nervous* way every night is inclined toward an early breakdown. And from abundant knowledge on this subject I assure you that the average school child, and especially the over-conscientious school children, usually girls, are over-fatigued after a few weeks of school. Lessons should not be given out to be done in the evening or over Sunday until the pupil is developed enough to have nerve-cells developed to almost the adult condition of size and vigor.

4. *Food.* The fourth suggestion is that there must be *abundant and proper food*. The only food-principle that replaces worn out tissue is what is known as protein. This is commonly thought to be contained chiefly in meats, but not only meats contain it in an easily available form, for many vegetables, especially peas and beans, contain proteid in large amount. It is especially important that the growing child should have a sufficient amount of protein food, preferably from both fresh meat and vegetables. Furthermore, he should have an abundance of fat, vegetable or animal. These are the main suggestions, short and simple enough, that I have to offer in the dietetic direction. Perhaps the average child, and adult, too, does not eat enough fat. A large amount of this alimentary principle is necessary to proper nourishment and replenishment of the nerve cells of the brain and spinal cord. These get their nourishment from a substance (chromatin) which is partly protein and partly fat, a body of the class called lipoids.

No one, hardly, ever knew of a grouchy fat man; it is a matter almost proverbial that all fat people are good natured. And in that good nature there is not only something pleasant to meet with and have in the family, but it is one of the very most important things underlying plenty of ease in acquiring knowledge, in learning. You do only with a great waste of energy what you do not enjoy doing.

So long as the child is growing in stature, then, he should have an abundance of protein and of fat. Carbohydrates should likewise be in quantity: these are the sugars and starches. The essential muscles cannot work without sugar. They live chiefly on sugar. The child requires sugar just as certainly as sunlight and fresh air. The only exception to the use of sugar by children is eating between meals. If the boy or girl has a well developed outdoor appetite, derived from gross muscular exercise, a slice of bread and butter will taste just as good as cake or pastry or anything else that is sweet. The great armies of the world are now furnished candy as a matter of the ordinary ration. (Queen Victoria a year or two before she died sent half a pound of sweet chocolate to every British soldier in South Africa, and the boxes you will find scattered all over the world today in the homes of Britons treasured like a family heirloom.) Candy of various kinds is served in quantities to every army as part of its regular ration. This is because they have to do a large amount of muscular work in walking, etc., all of which demands sugar to provide the energy as well as protein to restore the worn-out tissue.

School-children should drink a large amount of water, a much larger amount than the average child is inclined to take without impulsion. The regular practice of this habit supplies water to flush out and keep cleaner the digestive tract and tends to keep the kidneys and the skin in good condition. It is an advantage to drink a large amount of water with the meals, as well as between meals, with one important proviso: The child is apt to take a big mouthful of food and then wash it down with a big mouthful of water without the formality of mastication. Guard against this one bad habit and see that there is thorough mastication of the food, and I can assure you on general authority that a considerable amount of water with the meals is an advantage in every way. It makes the food more enjoyed and is "to the good" in other ways. They used to think that the stomach was a closed bag secreting a certain amount of gastric juice and that therefore if you drank water it would promptly mix with it and so dilute it that indigestion would result. To-day we know in the first place that ultimate digestion is rather more intestinal than gastric, and moreover that if you drink a pint of water, in a very few minutes it will be in the intestines and in another short interval in the blood itself. It does not come into much contact with the gastric juice or the secluded glands secreting it. Therefore have the children drink more water at and between meals!

Amount of food: There is less need to speak of that in a well-to-do community, certainly not the need there is in parts of all large cities. No child should ever have less than 70 calories per kilogram of his body-weight: that is the technical dietetic standard for growing children. (Infants below school age should have at least 90 calories.) Today you can readily figure out the fuel-value of foods in terms of the common measures,—an ordinary glass of milk is worth so many calories, a usual portion of butter so much, etc., etc. A little care would enable any parent or teacher to estimate the food-value of all the nutrients the child eats. But no one but an ultra-scientific parent would do it; and I would not want them to, simply because it is usually unnecessary.

School children should eat an abundance of easily digestible food rather often. Children should eat on some other plan than the *boa-constrictor* method. (The *boa-constrictor*, it is said, eats one meal every six months and then sleeps more or less until the next meal-time.) They should always have breakfast. In the great cities it is a rather common experience to see school-children who have had nothing substantial: the child will eat a banana or something that “fills,” but which as fuel is worth only a few calories, practically valueless as physiological food. You should give the pupil a good substantial breakfast, including something that is “warming.” Aside from poverty and parental ignorance it is, even among children, in some cases, quite a fad to go without breakfast altogether; the simple truth of this matter is that the people who adhere to this eat their breakfast the night before. The child, of course, should have the biggest meal in the middle of the day, that is, assuming that you have only one session of school and that the child has come home about 1 o'clock for the rest of the day. Of course it is true that for some time after a hearty meal free intellectual work is impossible, and so this advice would not apply where there is an afternoon session. But if possible, the school-child should have dinner when he comes home from school and not at night, especially when children are left free to eat then some things they should not be permitted to eat. It does not put a child in the best condition to sleep if the heavy meal is at night; on the other hand muscular exercise afterwards does not interfere with digestion. To my mind the ideal school-session would extend from 8:30 to 12:30 or from 9:00 to 1:00, with a recess of an half-hour, or even three-quarters, midway. Fatigue would then be minimized, dinner at the right time, and the afternoon be free for the indispensable exercise and play out of doors until supper-time.

Coffee, tea, chocolate, and cocoa I have already referred to. There is no notion that cocoa at breakfast will hurt any child, but at lunch it is apt to keep him from sleep and should never be used in any considerable strength within three or four hours of bed-time.

5. *Exercise.* The next hygienic point to be suggested in this more or less fortuitous series is *a great amount of muscular exercise*. An abundance outdoors is needed. The kind of exercise the child needs is *gross exercise*,—exercise which requires no mental strain, no nerve-strain, and which employs the gross muscles. Walking and running, climbing, etc., are the ideal forms of exercise; for they use two or three times the amount of muscle-tissue that any other kind of exercise uses. Unless the child be mentally overworked, the inherent and all-important impulse to activity will insure this indispensable adequacy of outdoor exercise. If the child is healthy and normal, instinct will see to it that he gets plenty of gross muscular exercise up to the age of eighteen or twenty, if he has the chance, spatial and temporal.

One thing of which it is no use to talk, but which should be forever remembered is *country-life*. Country-life is the only physiologic child's life. The cry of "back to the farm," "close to nature," "next to the ground," or any other of the numerous similarly slangy expressions which mean so very much for the good of the child and the future generations, should not be lightly dismissed. Those children brought up in places where there is plenty of room and abundant outdoor time are extremely fortunate. This is one of the greatest problems of the future. The trolleys, telephone, electricity, moving-pictures, libraries, parcel-post are beginning to solve that great problem. They and other things are rapidly making country-life more and more attractive, and before you know it the abandoned farms will all be gone and then who knows but what there will be tenements to let in the cities' crowded districts!

6. *Freedom from care and worry.* Childhood is the care-free period of life. None the less a good many conscientious children do worry in school-time, although they do not make it so manifest as the old-maid aunt or the over-worked, dependent father. They worry about their lessons and all sorts of things related thereto. Education should *not* worry them. If their education is to be of any use, it should be in the main attractive and absolutely without any possible element of worry. You cannot expect the child to sleep well, for example, who has worry on his mind.* The education of the

*See the present writer's recent "Nerve-Waste," Booklet, No. 27, in the series published by the Health-Education League, Boston.

mind, as well as that of the body, as the physiologist sees it, should be an attractive process, free of all worry. The chief objection to attractive education, as some think of it, is that it lessens the vigor of mental training. That is not of necessity at all true. A sufficiently skilled board of teachers could devise an educational system that would be attractive and even somewhat pleasurable to the child and at the same time have in it any amount of desirable mental training and discipline. These two things (attractiveness and training) are not inherently exclusive; the idea that they are so comes from the old notion of the continual use of the rod, and thinks of discipline as mostly dependent on punishment. I maintain that a professionally skilled teacher will make education at once attractive and give it plenty of physical and mental discipline too. The mental training should be included in the attractive education. Recently various writers have emphasized by research the various degrees of efficiency with which people do things when they enjoy or dislike doing it. For example, the well-known research by Professor Book on the acquirement of skill on the typewriter. He convinced himself that on what are called "off-days," when the individual did not enjoy his work or practice, he made no *advance* whatever in learning, he did not *increase* his skill any or improve his speed or his technique or accuracy; there was no advance on those days in which the individual did not "feel like" doing the work. The moral of this important research is not that we must stop routine work when it is not pleasant, but that we must not try to do extremely difficult and new things when we do not enjoy it. Artists of all kinds discovered that many years ago. No artist thinks of composing on a novel, or a piece of music, or doing original work on a painting or statue when he is feeling out of sorts and does not really wish to do it. He will go away for a month or a year and then come home and, for example, paint a picture in a week which he can sell for more than one a drudge could paint in six months.

It remains for the school-system to adopt this important method of the artist, or to rediscover it anew and apply to the high purpose of education. Education should be made more attractive. You should not expect children to carry on with true success this extremely complicated process of learning something unless the work be presented in such a way as to be pleasant to them. That which is pleasant is usually interesting,—and *vice versa*. You may take a boy to school and "punish" him and so make him study after a fashion, but it is at a great *extravagance* of nerve-strength. Joy is the birth-right of every child; and moreover the child's efficiency

is greatly increased by letting him be joyous. Happiness, like honesty, is the best policy as well as the best experience in general that we can get out of life. It is not only "the greatest thing in the world," but it is the best "business," for it gives you the greatest index of efficiency that is possible.*

An element of this matter too often ignored by parents as well as teachers, is encouragement. Certainly children do not get enough encouragement from their parents, and commonly none from their teachers. The parents may leave it to the teacher and the teacher leaves it to the parent—with the inevitable result that the child does not get encouragement at all. Specific encouragement as to the details of his work is needed by every child.

7. *Sexual enlightenment.* It is more than high time that this subject *were* in the air, as it is to some extent today. There is great need for sane enlightenment on sexual matters; that is, knowledge of the theory of love in the minds of growing (as of adult) people. The average parent still believes that sexual ideas and feelings and curiosity do not develop much until puberty. That is not true. We now realize (Freud) that the child usually gets curious about sexual matters when he or she is from eight to ten years of age, if not earlier. This is purely intellectual curiosity and not much based on physiological conditions. It is purely ideal or intellectual curiosity, curiosity to know where babies come from, just as there is curiosity to know what is on the other side of the moon or why the rain comes. This sort of curiosity can be and should be satisfied when it appears, and by the parents.

The important psychological reason why the child should be gratified in this is because satisfaction drives the curiosity out of the mind. Explain to an active boy how a machine works and he will be more apt to stop thinking about it—his impulsive curiosity is gone, but unless you do satisfy this sexual curiosity early, it *remains* and works subconsciously and may work to the child's disadvantage. This is sound psychophysiology. These perfectly natural and inevitable ideas arising about the age of ten, or even years earlier in an inquiring mind, are clearly and purely scientific and when explained will tend to disappear until the time of puberty. Then they become instinctive and you cannot and do not wish to make them disappear, and the enlightenment then must be in an adult fashion and in a more complete way. Before puberty there is nothing of necessity especially interesting

* This whole matter is discussed in G. V. N. Dearborn: "The Sthenic Index in Education," *Pedagogical Seminary*, xix, 2, June 1912, pp. 166-185.

about sexual matters until they grow into the overwhelming sexual instinct. Schools of eugenics are being started. A pioneer school has just been started in Boston by Doctor Evangeline W. Young, and bids fair to become a valuable institution, for it is a school where teachers and parents and social workers can be enlightened on all the scientific phases of sexual matters. And there are plenty of things yet to be worked out. The details are rather difficult, but no one is going to admit that so tremendous and important a matter cannot be solved to the solid and lasting satisfaction of all concerned, born and unborn. The so-called social evil is one of the tremendous crimes and scandals of civilization, and this "great enlightenment" is in my opinion the only practical way to hold it in check: actual definite knowledge on the part of every one, just as every one knows the ill effects of alcohol and of the excessive use of tobacco or other drugs.

There is a real need to call attention to these educational dangers arising everywhere chiefly because the average teacher and the average parent do not realize that the nature of the child is different from that of the adult. Our children are not indeed young men and little women, far from it: they are different in every way and it is time that all persons concerned realize this truly important fact.

The science of child-physiology strangely enough, has not yet been born, while that of child-psychology is still in its early infancy. When these two sciences have developed somewhat into a real competency and have been adequately applied to education, we shall see a tremendous benefit not only in the efficiency of our schools as a working machine, but in the happiness and usefulness of their product:—the contented and prosperous *family*, knowing well, parents and children both, how to prosper. Our children are decreasing in number largely on the plea that the few will have a better chance,—is it not time now seriously to consider, all of us together (parents, teachers, and scientists), why this better chance is not coming to them in larger measure? For the children are everything.