SCHOOL AND INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

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School and Industrial Hygiene by D. F. Lincoln

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PART I.

SCHOOL HYGIENE.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL REMARKS.

THE period at which we live is witnessing great changes in the theory and practice of education, from the lowest to the highest grades. The nature of the child's mind has been studied, his powers gauged, and his growth measured by a Pestalozzi, a Froebel, a Combe, a Chadwick, a Bowditch. Everybody knows that children do not like to sit still long at a time; that their minds easily wander; that they have an instinctive dislike to certain studies. This restlessness of mind and body, this dislike to certain mental foods, were regarded by the old masters as simply undesirable elements in character, to be curbed and chained, and overcome by force of dis-

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cipline. The modern tendency is in a very different direction; it studies the natural behavior of children, and deduces from multiplied observations certain laws regarding their natural powers and aptitudes, to which all educational processes are subordinated.

To some extent the old masters were right; curbs have their use, and "old-fashioned" hard work ought not to be forgotten. Nor is the newer education free from grave faults of its own; or let us rather say, that right principles are not yet fully adopted by all. A great many teachers have found that emulation is a more than effectual substitute for the rod. This is one of the most characteristic of modern improvements; but its potency has no sooner been discovered than it is abused, and many a promising child, within the past thirty years, has wrecked his physical endurance for life, or has permanently enfeebled his mind by excess of study performed under the spur of emulation or an unregulated sense of duty.

No theory of education is satisfactory that does not claim the whole child. The State must leave a great many things to the parents in education; but it is her duty to attend to such things as parents cannot be made to attend to. Religion is a thing which the State does not try to teach, assuming that parents and churches can more safely attend to it; but morality must be taught at school. All schools assume

GENERAL REMARKS.

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the immorality of falsehood and brutality, and the paramount obligation to perform school-tasks. It would be easy to take classes of ignorant, poor children, before they reach the age of street ruffians (which so many become after leaving the public school), and not only to show them, but to convince them of the necessity for truth, peaceable behavior, and respect for law, and of the necessary connection between duty or work performed and the prosperity of one and all.* In our public schools, I think this is hardly attempted. And yet, setting aside the moral, and assuming the sanitarian, ground as our sole basis, it is assuredly true that these branches of morals, and others that might be named, as punctuality, cleanliness, politeness, and faithfulness to engagements, are not things which can be neglected.

Again: the food and sleep of the child are mainly beyond the control of public schools. They are not wholly so, however; and it is a teacher's duty to discourage working in improper hours. Still more imperatively is it his duty to regulate the child's needs in school-time, to see if he is faint from want of food, to encourage and teach good habits, and to give opportunity for bodily exercise.

No lower aim should content the child's teacher than that of improving all his faculties and powers-

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^{*}For admirable illustrations of this kind of teaching, see George Combe's "Education," edited by Wm. Jolly, 1879.