

EDITOR'S SPECIAL DEPARTMENT.

AS A TEST of the degree of civilization of a people, an eminent German authority has urged that, we should take, not the fine buildings—dwellings, palaces, halls, etc., and works of art, but the back yards, lanes and manner of disposal of the sewage and other refuse of life. The strongest proof of civilization is the value placed upon life; and where the back premises are disregarded, life will be shorter than where these are carefully kept and free from all waste matters. As the Tennessee State Board of Health Bulletin gives it, All persons who have given much attention to the inspection of premises are impressed with the singularly unwise contrast between the front and rear of city dwelling-houses. The front rooms of houses are generally but little occupied, being used for show or temporary purposes. Care, attention and cost are devoted to the front, while the rear is too often in an unkempt, desolate state. The reverse should be the case. Use rather than show. With us in America it is always show before use.

NOW IS THE TIME to clean up; that is, if every spot has not been kept thoroughly clean. Within, from cellar floor to roof; and without, from back-yard limits, (for it will be best to begin there) to street. Dust and scrub, rake and dig, and burn with fire, till every spot is absolutely clean, and the whole premises are free from every trace of waste or refuse. Use soap and carbolic acid freely within the dwelling, and lime wash outside. If any animals are kept,—fowls, dogs, pigs, or any other, see that the places they inhabit are made and kept as clean as it is possible to make or keep them. This is a matter of economy if nothing more. For all animals, as well as men, women, and children, will thrive and do better if kept clean.

A GOOD SIGN is in the firmament of the public health; that which we find in the leading medical journals giving much more attention to questions hygiene, even to play and games. In the issue of this JOURNAL for January we referred to an article in the New York Medical Journal upon play as a means of development. In a late issue of the British Medical Journal (March 16th), is an article on the Educational Value of

Outdoor Games; which games are doubtless a much more healthful way of promoting education than that of book-lore in a badly ventilated school-room. The organized game is a means of co-ordinating the spontaniety of brain action which is the basis of intellectual effort. The word of command, the sight of the flying ball, are impressions quickly followed by rapid and accurate action. 'Organized play produces a most useful effect. It trains the boy to do correctly just what he is told to do, and, while his spontaneous action is encouraged, he is kept ever ready to act according to circumstances. Play is healthful; so is the alternation of mental work and active play.

HERBERT SPENCER has said that the first requisite to success in life is to be a good animal; and to be a nation of good animals is the first condition of national prosperity. Now I don't believe that we can have a good human animal without co-ordinate mental and physical development. A good first class human animal must be of pleasing appearance; have pleasing features and graceful movements and attitude. We cannot have these without mental culture, and the mental culture must go "hand in hand" with the physical. Hitherto the one great aim in education has been the development of the mental faculties. We must not now go to the other extreme.

VEGETARIANISM seems to be growing apace, both in England and on this continent. It is contended that a vegetable diet gives a clearer head. Perhaps on the principal that a beef-steak is too stimulating. according to the Philadelphia Times, Rider Haggard has become a vegetarian. He found by experiment that he could work longer and to better effect on a meatless diet than when he indulged freely in beef and mutton, and that the imagination becomes more active when the body abstains from animal nourishment. We have not become a convert to this ism, but there is much evidence certainly in its favor.

THE DIET has, it is now more perhaps than ever before conceded, a tremendous influence, not only upon diseased physical conditions, but upon the mental faculties also. We are not positive as to the authenticity of the statement,