

THE PUBLIC PLAYGROUND AND ITS RELATION TO THE JUVENILE COURT

We have an old proverb that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," like most of our Anglo-Saxon proverbs its style is terse and inelegant, but its truth is undeniable. In this article, I shall endeavor to place before the reader statistics and proof, showing the powerful influence for good exerted over troublesome boys and girls by public playgrounds.

I may say, at the outset, that the difficulty in writing an article such as this, is not in the obtaining of proof, but in compressing the large amount of proof obtainable, within the limits of this article. The playground movement has been established long enough to enable us to state most emphatically that it is neither an experiment, a fad or a failure, but has proven a distinct and decided success wherever it has been given an adequate trial.

The Father of All Crime

Some one has said that "idleness is the father of all crime," and Moreau tells us that "idleness and vagabondage are almost always, with children, the source of crime." From the large number of records I have studied in this connection, I feel quite safe in saying that at least 80 per cent. of crime committed by juveniles and young men is directly traceable to idleness. Apropos of the above, the following table, compiled by the celebrated criminologist, Ferriani, is of interest.

Age	Alto- gether idle	Half idle	Active but not fond of work	Like work	Like work from fear
8 to 10	217	100	15	3	19
10 to 14	380	175	25	12	8
14 to 18	283	75	40	20	4
18 to 20	232	195	152	44	1
Total	1,112	545	232	79	32

The above shows that out of a total of 2,000 young criminals 1,112 were completely idle, with a maximum of idleness at the age of 8 to 10 years. We read that: