

THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1881.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

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THE SCHOLAR'S EYE.

VIII.

HYGIENE OF SHORTSIGHTEDNESS.

THE general hygienic rules to be followed by short-sighted children and those with hereditary tendency thereto are important, and so simple that parents can be made to comprehend them, and yet it is astonishing how thoroughly they are neglected. Proper illumination, natural or artificial, a moderate use of the eyes if shortsightedness be present, and avoidance of the stooping or recumbent position while engaged in study or when using the eyes for near objects requiring the convergence of the axes of the two eye-balls, together with suitable glasses, comprise the most important of such hygienic rules. Our school furniture, usually a subject of pride on account of architectural neatness and elegance, is usually sadly inefficient as regards the height of desks, the angle at which they incline, and the distance between them and the seats when required for short-sighted pupils. Dr. Cohn, of Breslau, examined the school furniture at the Paris Expo-

sition and found the American desks as deficient in these respects as those of European make, as he has shown in an article, "The School-houses at the Paris Exposition, from a Hygienic point of view." The child is compelled to stoop and bring his face close to the desk in order to see the letters, the type of school books being commonly small and defective as regards clearness, and this stooping position and the straining of the internal recti muscles in efforts of convergence causes congestion, which may cause shortsightedness if any hereditary tendency thereto exists, or increase it if it is already present in even an extremely moderate degree. Stooping and excessive convergence cause congestion of the tunics of the globe; congestion by mechanical pressure tends to increase the bulging at the posterior pole, thus increasing the shortsightedness. Aside from the use of improper glasses, these two last are the most important factors in causing progressive myopia, and consequently, to keep the head erect, to bring the book to the face, and not the face to