

health, or for the still more important elementary training of the affections and moral faculties and instilment of religious principles, which are better acquirable from home teachings than from any School Board system. We are all of course agreed as to the duty of properly educating children so as to fit them mentally and bodily for the increasing requirements and competition of modern life. But as to the extent to which the former should be carried and the latter neglected in early childhood, there is unfortunately a great discrepancy between the rulers of the Education Department and the views of those who have to deal in disease with the consequences of the violation of the laws of nature. And hence, whilst little children are thereby overworked into disease or death, the physician must still raise his protesting voice, albeit it would apparently seem unheeded.

During the first eight or ten years of child-life, the amount of mental cultivation which a child's brain is capable of receiving with permanent advantage is much less than is commonly believed. No greater physiological mistake is possible than that of attempting any considerable degree of such culture until the sufficient development of the physical stamina and moral faculties is accomplished. The organ of the mind is as much a part of the body as the hand, and ere either can function properly, its vital force must be fostered and maintained by nutrition and developed by physical exercise. A large proportion of those who come within the provisions of the Elementary Education Code are semi-starved children of the poorest class, who, when thus debilitated by privation, are necessarily as much incapacitated for any mental strain as for the accomplishment of any herculean feat of physical strength, it being not less inhuman, injudicious and impolitic to expect the former than it would be the latter from those so circumstanced.

If the State, for reasons of public policy, determines that all children shall be compulsorily educated from their earliest years, it should certainly afford the means by which this may be least injuriously and most effectually carried out, by providing food and physical training as well as mental education for every pauper child attending an Elementary school.

Amongst the results of over-pressure in such schools under the Boards referred to are brain disease in all forms—viz., cephalitis, cerebritis and meningitis, as well as headache, sleeplessness, neuroses of every kind, and other evidences of cerebro-nervous disorders. On no other ground can the increasing prevalence of these affections amongst the little victims of the Educational Department be accounted for or explained, than by ascribing them to the new factors, "brain excitement" and "over-pressure," which in the case of young children are now too commonly disastrously associated with the process of misdirected education and neglected physical training.

In connection with the physical management of childhood, I may add a few words on the abuse of alcoholic stimulants. The evils resulting from the abuse of alcohol were never so prevalent as at present, and are traceable in the diseases of youth as well as in those of adult existence. The results of this acquired or inherited alcoholism are brought under clinical observation in the form of cerebral gastric and hepatic disorders, and especially cirrhosis of the liver, which as well as the protean forms of cerebro-spinal disease, and the various neuroses, are so frequently noticed in hospitals for children, and to which I have elsewhere directed attention. In the majority of these cases of juvenile alcoholism that have come under my care in the Children's Hospital, Dublin, this tendency appears inherited and most marked in those whose mothers were inebriates—intemperance in