

HOUSEHOLD.

Doctors versus Teachers.

'I am so puzzled,' writes a mother, 'about my daughter Helen. She is so nervous, and so irritable, that she is almost hysterical, and the tears come to her eyes if I speak to her. I don't mean if I find fault with her, for I am very gentle in my treatment of the child; but if I address her suddenly, or ask her where she has been, or whether she knows her lessons. Our doctor says: "Take Helen out of school for six months, and let her stay out of doors, and build up her strength." But what is to become of her education if she is to be interrupted within a year of her graduation, and kept at home. The other girls will get far ahead of her, and she will not want to go back. I am puzzled; what do you advise?'

This mother is not solitary or singular in her bewilderment. The situation is not uncommon. Many girls at sixteen or seventeen find the demands of the physical and the school life in conflict, and when the doctor is consulted, he sensibly prescribes rest and change.

Teachers naturally deprecate the dropping out of classes of pupils who are doing good work, and who, from the pedagogical viewpoint, are not overworked. Miss R—, who is principal of a high school, and whose opportunities for studying girls are multiplied, says that the difficulty generally lies in the home life, not in the school work. She has found over and over that girls try to keep up a sort of social life that is unwise—receiving their boy friends in the evening, and going to parties and companies which keeps them out of bed until midnight. She insists that schoolgirls cannot spread their strength over too much space, and declares that a girl who does her work faithfully, loses no sessions, either half days or whole days, during a term, who eats good food, and retires at an early hour, seldom breaks down. She is very emphatic in her disapproval of the candy habit, and says that girls who nibble at sweets seldom eat their meals as they ought.

I advise Helen's mother to follow her physician's advice, if, and only if, Helen has been doing nothing but her school work. If Helen has been allowed too much social freedom, or too many sweets, it may be worth while to try what virtue there is in dieting and early hours. But, and this every mother should remember, if a girl's strength is not sufficient to keep her buoyant and cheery at sixteen, there is something very much amiss. How will she endure the later strain—that will come at twenty, at twenty-five and at thirty? It is much safer and far wiser to defer her graduation from the high school a year or two, than to let her drift into a condition of nervous invalidism, that may become chronic.

Without a good physical basis, mental growth is apt to be impeded. How does your daughter dress? is a question I would ask the mother whose young daughter gives signs of fragility. Has she plenty of room to breathe? A young girl does not need and should not wear any article of dress that cramps her and interferes with the free circulation of the blood in her veins. Tight shoes and high heels have caused many a nervous headache. Some girls are not clothed warmly enough; others need glasses, they suffer from eye-strain that an oculist could relieve. No girl should be permitted to study hour after hour at home after school. Most of the school work should be done in the schoolroom, and several hours of fresh air and exercise should be a part of the young girl's daily regimen.

It is very much better to withdraw a student from school entirely, than to suffer her to attend school at her discretion and remain absent whenever she chooses. This fosters a habit of irresponsibility, and is greatly to be dreaded in its effect on character. When the doctor is obeyed, let the cessation from school and from social amusements as well be thorough, and, if possible, interest your daughter in the simple duties of home, and send her often out of doors, until she gains color and flesh, and forgets the bondage of her nerves.—'Christian Herald.'

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