

better appreciation of the disadvantages it imposes; but that this defect is becoming every year more general among all civilized nations is a fact that cannot be denied. Unfortunately, we have in this country no exact statistics on anything like an adequate scale, but the question has been exhaustively investigated in others, especially in Germany. The tables collected by Prof. Cohn prove that the percentage of short-sighted individuals increases steadily from the lower classes upwards in every grade of schools, is greater as a rule in the higher than in the elementary schools, and reaches its maximum among the students of the universities. No doubt the character of German type is to some extent answerable for its almost universal existence in a less or greater degree in that country, but the evidence of its increase is no less complete in Russia, Italy and America. Short-sight or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, the conditions structural and functional that predispose to it, are certainly transmitted from parent to child, as is seen when the children of educated artisans and tradespeople are compared with those of wholly illiterate peasantry in the same schools in countries like Hungary and Russia, where education has hitherto been but partial. But it may be produced in eyes originally perfectly normal, and is rapidly aggravated by unfavourable conditions in those already affected. That the upper ranks of society, whose ancestors have for many generations enjoyed literary education, are not in a worse plight than the middle classes, is not, as one correspondent urges, inconsistent with the hereditary transmission of short sight. For we cannot lay too much stress on the fact that it is not the use of the eyes as such, but work protracted and carried on under *unfavourable* conditions that induces this defect, whence it is only natural that those who read and write in well-lighted rooms, and recreate their eyes with out-door exercise and sports, should suffer less than the children of the poor and lower middle classes, whose "schooling" is begun earlier, and who almost in infancy are poring over books or needlework in ill-lighted schools and darker rooms at home, and whose visual prospects are limited by the opposite houses in the street."