

PUBLIC OPINION.

THE HALF DAY SCHOOL.—What are the best school hours for children? The doctors have decided that four hours a day, from nine till one, are the best both for girls and boys. Some will ask themselves whether the doctors have taken into due consideration the peril to young people that is inseparable from hours of aimless idleness. It will hardly be disputed that the hours of mental strain or what should be mental strain, have always been too long, and in one way or another tend to a less intellectual result than shorter hours would. It must be admitted, too, that hardly any use of the energies is more useful and educative than play. On the playground every muscle finds joyous exercise, and the elasticity of childhood allows for considerable strains which would be dangerous in later life. All the physical faculties which are for the most part suppressed during intellectual study, and which an exhausting school system tends to atrophy, are there on the alert. And nowhere is one better trained in knowledge of and in dealing with one's fellow-man than in the generous contentions of the playground, where, in many respects, the conditions are but an epitome of what is called the battle of life. There prevails there a fairly good code of morals, the precipitate of the better feelings of senior society, and a fine, breezy, imperative public opinion to enforce it. A grown man may be accounted "mean" by every acquaintance he has, and never be told of it or suspect it. Not so the boy. Each neighbor in turn tells him just what he thinks and by the community generally he is greeted with "kick him out; he has no friends." The playground code might, no doubt, be raised in tone, and fearful is the responsibility of those who are in a

position to do good in this way and do it not, for it is strong, true men our country needs more than it needs anything, and it is largely on the playground that men are made or marred. It is to be regretted, we think, that play has ceased to be pure play. Forty or fifty years ago professionalism in play was hardly heard of. There was hardly such a thing as a club, and no temptation to smallness in obtaining money for uniforms or in scheming for gate money. Boys played shinny or cricket straight on for the love of the fun. They took no account of the games; could not have told at night how many they had lost or won, and as they chose sides every day the enemy of yesterday was the ally of to-day. Possibly the boys of those days would have been proud to see their exploits in the newspapers. Certainly they would have been greatly astonished, for nothing was further from their thoughts than notoriety. That Arcadian unconsciousness and simplicity was probably far more wholesome than the sophisticated semi-professionalism of to-day.—*The Montreal Witness*.

VERY LITTLE.—My experience in Normal work is leading me to doubt very strongly, whether the mathematics taught in our schools is furnishing the mind with thinking power. I doubt if the teachers themselves know how little thinking the children need to do, if only the form of the thought, the words, are learned. We home people see the other side of this question.

Then I feel that the school is doing very little for our children spiritually. Of course what is done in this line depends upon the teacher, mainly upon the standard of the Principal. A high-