SCHOOL DOCTORS AND CHILDREN'S TEETH.

Some time ago I published an article in the "Socialist Review" called "Physical Deterioration as Seen by a Dentist." In the meantime, the inspection of school children by state medical officers has been added to the long list of Socialist measures this individualistic nation has been compelled to adopt. And what every tooth mender and ender knew perfectly well, has been confirmed by the examination doctors, viz., that the teeth of John Bull's children are bad, very bad, and rapidly growing worse. Some report sixty per cent.; but where the doctor in his hasty peep into each of a hundred mouths find 60 with decay, the specialist with mirror and probe would discover 90. I was talking to one of these new servants of the state, who is keenly interested in his work, and he summed up the case in the following phrase. "If I could only put the youngsters to rights at both ends—prevent the foot and mouth diseases they nearly all have—the health of our schools would go ahead splendidly." Before coming to my own department let us see what the man meant by foot diseases. Every boy, that is a boy, when he meets a puddle on his way to school, samples that flood with his feet. Scold as you like, the genus boy, will continue to walk through puddles, while the little girls imitate their brothers, and soak their own slighter footgear. And the foot gear of the average elementary school child is not damp proof, while the best of boots turn traitor when treated as the puddle paddler serves them. Into school they merrily troop, hang up their wet overcoats in a nice, warm lobby, then sit at the desks dangling those damp understandings below, while the schoolmaster stimulates the understandings above. And every health student knows that it is safer to have warm feet and wet clothing above, than dry jackets and cold, damp toes. This observant medical inspector had looked low enough to see the cause of half the winter colds and lowered vitality of his flock. "I want my charges to come barefoot, or change their shoes and

322