

EFFECT OF FATIGUE.

The important point here is that an individual in this exhausted condition has little power of control either of mind or body; he cannot act precisely or think accurately or readily. All who have studied physics know that the law of conservation of energy reigns throughout the world; and fatigue falls under the law. All work requires the expenditure of energy, and when the work makes too great demands upon the energy, then in animal life fatigue with all its disagreeable concomitants follows. The individual is in such event no longer himself. He acts stupid, or feels restless and discontented. Matters do not seem to go right. Things that he usually enjoys are now indifferent or distasteful. He is angered quickly, and has little ambition or courage to attempt difficult tasks. So the list of objectionable accompaniments of fatigue might be spun out indefinitely.

This subject has been studied in many school-rooms during the last few years and all who have made investigations agree quite generally as to its frequency, its causes, and its effects. It will be well to indicate briefly, in the first place, some of the more general and frequent causes of fatigue in young children so that they may be detected by any teacher who will give the matter her attention.

NUTRITION.

The most essential requisite for the health of the nervous system is that there shall be the proper amount and kind of nutrition. It is a law of life revealed in nature universally that there cannot be complete harmonious development of individuals unless the condition of right nutrition is properly fulfilled,—unless they have enough of the right kind of food. And again different parts of any plant or animal require different

kinds of food for their nourishment. In the growing wheat, for instance, the material which is required to fill out the kernel is not adapted to make the stalk. In the apple tree the same elements do not go to make both leaves and fruit. So in the human body the food that will make bones and flesh will not be best suited to make brain and muscle. Doubtless everyone knows that the cases are not uncommon when the food of children does not have enough of the sort of material to make rugged bones and they become bowlegged, or suffer with rickets or other disease due to lack of proper bone nutrition. While we have observed this fact in regard to the growth of bone, probably because the effect is so evident to the eye, still we have apparently not believed that the same law holds in regard to nutrition of the brain, or at least we do not take account of it extensively in practice.

CHILDREN WHO SUFFER FROM BRAIN STARVATION.

It is my purpose here to impress upon my readers the well-established fact that pupils in school frequently suffer from lack of proper brain nutrition, and are hence continually in a state of fatigue of greater or less degree; which means simply in this connection that the brain cells are not sufficiently replenished with the proper sort of food material. This may be due to any of a number of conditions which exist in many homes. Certain children do not eat enough because they arise too late in the morning and have no time for breakfast; others have no appetite for the substantial things that are put before them, partaking only of sweet stuffs; while in other cases poverty may make it impossible to supply enough of nutritious food. I have in mind now two or three young children coming from what would be called