

HYGIENE IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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THIS is a subject which has recently been attracting a large share of the attention of scientists and public educators, and whose importance is everywhere beginning to be more fully appreciated. There is reason for congratulation in this fact, for we have heretofore been seriously derelict in the matter of giving that prominence which the subject demands to the various details embraced in hygienic education. One is almost startled, on inquiry regarding what has been done towards imparting information on sanitary matters to the young, to find how much we are behind countries whose general civilization has not reached the point to which it has attained in this country. We may not, however, be so much surprised if we take into consideration the fact that Canada is still comparatively in its infancy, and that there have been so many questions with which it was absolutely necessary that we should deal, that anything not absolutely indispensable has thus far been left in abeyance. But it is gratifying to know that public sentiment is every day receiving additional enlightenment upon this great branch of sanitary education; and we may hope, ere long, to adopt such measures as will secure, in the most effectual way, proper hygienic instruction in our public schools.

In the minds of some there will be an impression adverse to the introduction of the subject into the system of instruction in our public schools.

Many are at present expressing the conviction that the mental energies of our children are being over-taxed. This may or may not be the case. In the hands of injudicious teachers such a possibility may arise as an over-strain upon the mental powers of the young. Judiciously directed, however, we have no cause for solicitude in our present curriculum. It ought, in our judgment, to be constantly kept in mind that the vast majority of the children trained at our public schools really complete their education in them. And it is creditable to those who framed our present system of education, that it is already so complete that the parent, knowing that he is not likely ever to be able to offer any higher educational advantages to his child than are to be found in the public school, need have no anxiety as to the thorough preparation he or she will there receive for the pursuit of all the ordinary avocations of life. Well, if this be the case, and so enormous a proportion of our children are being every year qualified for the responsibilities of after-life; if they are acquiring all the mental training of which they are capable during their connection with our public schools; are we exceeding our duty in endeavouring to render that training as complete as possible in all that relates to practical life? Certainly, the thought must commend itself to the calm judgment of every enlightened man that, in failing to offer such facilities to our children as