

The physical benefits accruing to children who, during their childhood, engage in physical exercise in the open air are too obvious to need mentioning.

We must not lose sight of the moral value of play for all, young and old alike; in choosing amusements, choose things according to character; during our leisure hours we show what we really are, for the thing chosen as a pastime is chosen freely and may be a trivial matter, or on the other hand, may be a choice between things good and bad, and will bring us into contact either with those better or worse than ourselves. Let a boy go into a game that has no meanness in it, let him play the game for the game's sake, he comes out braced up and exhilarated; there he has shown what he is and what he intends to be, and after such play he will go to his tasks and do them like a free boy and not like a young galley-slave.

I have seen boys stand watching their more fortunate fellows play games, which these boys did not know how to play, till the excitement of the sport took possession of them and found vent in clumsy horse-play and grotesque actions; till they ended by making themselves objectionable to all around.

I have seen young men and women, from good homes, engage in romping rough-and-tumble, not at all good to look at. The trouble simply was, not that they were bad or vicious, but that they had not, when younger, learned to play games, or indeed, play at all.

Know How to Play

It is imperatively important that we know how to work; it is hardly less important that we know how to play.

Those acquainted with the larger cities of Europe are no doubt familiar with the sight of what are called in London "street Arabs." I have frequently watched children of this description playing in some of London's "East End" streets who, as they played, betrayed a pitiful insight, on their part, into the amusements (?) of their elders. One game in particular I noticed, which seemed to be a favorite one (it was played by both boys and girls). A couple of boys would pretend to come home intoxicated; would then quarrel with, and beat, the girls who were acting as wives in this little drama (the profanity of the language used left nothing lacking as regards realism). The girls would call for the police, whereupon the boys who were acting that part would put in an appearance, and a free-for-all fight would take place.