

SANITARY CONDITION

—OF—

RURAL SCHOOLS.

Martial, the father of epigrammatists, crystallized a large part of the human experience of his day in the short sentence: *Non est vivere, sed valere vita*—"Life is not living, but the enjoyment of health." After the experience of seventeen centuries more, our own poet, Thomson, sung: "Health is the vital principle of bliss." No doubt the paramount importance of health to happiness will be acknowledged to the end of time. It is universally admitted to be easier to preserve health than to recover it, that health once lost is difficult or impossible to regain; yet few seem to think about preserving it until they find that they are losing or have lost it. To get and keep wealth a hundred times as much trouble and anxiety seem to be exercised as to get and keep health; but let disease lay hold on the money-seeker, and you may see him eager to spend his last dollar, could it but purchase that which he carelessly lost or deliberately threw away.

The life and health of the young occupy only a small proportion of the attention which they deserve. A funeral cortege passed along Talbot street the other day. Some one inquired, "Whose funeral?" Reply was made, "It's only a child's." The answer does not strike one as unfamiliar. The public mourns the departure of a life whose work seems to us well-nigh accomplished; but the loss of the life of a child with all its unfolded possibilities is deplored only by the household. Indeed some good people talk as if they thought one of the chief uses of children is to afford the Father of all Good a means of visiting on families blessing in affliction. Strange that God, while He walked on earth, manifest in the flesh should delight in daily moving among the people blessing the children, raising the palsied, casting out devils, and healing all manner of diseases, as was read in our hearing this morning, but, that God in heaven should look with complacency on the suffering of our little ones prostrated on beds of racking pain that they cannot understand at all, for the sole benefit of us older sinners. No; the truth taught us by statistics is that over one-fourth of all the lives God gives our race are sacrificed in early youth to the devils of sin and ignorance and uncleanness (foul air).*

Much mischief comes from the over-estimation of the strength and hardiness of youth. On a chilly day in late September thirty children sat in an unwarmed school-room, the little girls shivering, their cheeks and lips blue with cold. A trustee of the school when told that "the stove should be put up at once or those children will get their death of cold," replied "Oh, they're young and strong; when I was like them I could stand anything." It is in youth that the seeds of invalidism and weakness are often planted, and in no other period of life is greater precaution necessary for the preservation of health. Begin to train a man when he is young

*Out of 22,208 deaths registered in the Province of Ontario in 1881, the latest year for which a report is published, 9,510 deaths, or 43 out of every 100, were of persons under 11 years of age. For the preceding five years the percentage of deaths under 11 years has varied from 39 to 44!