

Health and recreation in childhood / by William N. Maccall.

Contributors

Maccall, William N.
Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association.
University of Glasgow. Library

Publication/Creation

Manchester ; London : John Heywood for the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, [1880]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/xbrhrm6k>

Provider

University of Glasgow

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The University of Glasgow Library. The original may be consulted at The University of Glasgow Library. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

HEALTH AND RECREATION IN CHILDHOOD.

BY WILLIAM N. MACCALL, M.D.,

Honorary Surgeon to the Clinical Hospital and Dispensary for Children.

AS my daily work is the treatment of sick children, it naturally occurred to me that the most suitable subject I could choose for my lecture to you to-night would be the management of infancy and childhood so as best to ward off sickness. For those of us who have little ones committed to our care it must be a constantly present question, How are we to act so as to give them the largest measure of health and happiness in childhood? which alone can give that greatest of all blessings in after life, a sound mind in a sound body. It is said that we never know the full value of a good thing until we have lost it, but it is not necessary that we should have lost the blessing of health ourselves in order to see the immense difference between a child as it should be, a joyous being full of life and spirits, and the weakly or deformed little sufferers who fill the wards of our Children's Hospitals and meet our eyes whenever we walk in the streets.

Every one knows what a terrible waste of infant life there is, and I shall therefore not trouble you with many figures on the subject. A few will, however, serve to show you more clearly how we stand in Manchester. In all England and Wales, according to the census of 1871, out of every 1,000 children born 158 die before reaching the age of one year. This is a much higher death-rate than it should be. In certain districts it is much lower, and among the upper and professional classes only about 80 in the 1,000 die during the same period. But when we come home to Manchester we find that 213 out of 1,000, or fully one in five, die under twelve months old! The loss of life falls still more heavily on the working, especially

the factory, classes. It is not easy to give exact figures on that point, but both statistics and the experience of all who have to work among those classes show the loss is very great.

All this is very sad, and no words could paint it in stronger colours than the bare statement of the facts. But there is something sadder still, whether we think of its present aspect or its influence on the future of our race. In places like Manchester the number is very large of children who do not absolutely die, but drag on through an ailing or decrepit childhood to a weak and comparatively useless manhood or womanhood, possibly in their turn to give being to a still more degenerate offspring.

Is all this loss of life and loss of health a *necessary* and unavoidable result of our modern civilisation and modes of life? We can say most decidedly it is not unavoidable. It has no doubt arisen largely from certain conditions connected with that civilisation, such as the massing together of people in towns, the nature of their occupations, &c. But it can be lessened to a great extent; and it behoves all to do their best to battle against this great evil, the loss of life, of strength, of happiness, among the little ones, who are so powerless to help themselves. We shudder when we read of the loss of a hundred lives in a shipwreck, a railway accident, or a colliery explosion, and we demand a strict account from those who have been in charge. In Manchester many hundreds of children die needlessly every year, and we are too apt to think it must be so, and that no one is accountable.

In the mental and bodily vigour of its men and women lies the secret of the greatness of a race, and the downfall of many a once mighty nation has been brought about by the growth of habits enfeebling mind and body. As we cannot make a strong building on a weak foundation, we must begin by trying to secure for our children the fullest amount of health and strength. We may then with confidence leave the future of our race to take care of itself.

Very much has been done, and more is being done every day by public authorities and sanitarians, to lessen the amount of unnecessary death and disease among us. We trust their efforts will secure, for all, better houses, better water and drainage, means of isolating infectious disease, &c. It is not from this point of view, however, that I wish to speak to you to-night, but rather of what can be done at home by each person, in the houses and with the means they possess; of what each mother, nurse, or father, to whom is committed the care of a child, can do to give that child the best chance of growing up strong and vigorous.

My experience at a children's hospital has taught me two things in this matter—first, that a great deal of ignorance prevails on the simplest facts with regard to health ; and secondly, that mothers are usually grateful for information, and anxious to act upon it. In other words, it is want of knowledge, and not want of the will to do right, that is the root of the mischief. I trust that very soon the laws of health will be taught in our schools, and then such lectures as these will not be needed, but in the meantime they may bear some good fruit.

My subject is so large that I cannot pretend in one lecture to go deeply into any of the points. My purpose is rather to put into a somewhat connected form many of the hints and little pieces of advice on the care of children that I find it necessary to give in the course of my professional work. I shall roughly classify these remarks under the headings of Food, Clothing, and Recreation, including under one or other of these anything I have to say on Ventilation, Cleanliness, &c.

Let us then suppose we have a healthy child born, and consider under these headings how we are to act so as to give it the best chance of robust health.

FOOD.

At the outset comes the question, Should a mother suckle her child? To this there can be but one answer—yes—except in those special cases where it is decided by medical authority to be unwise. The breast milk is the natural food of the infant, a most perfect food in every respect, and sufficient for all its needs in the early months. No other form of food can thoroughly take its place, and the amount of sickness and death is very much greater among infants brought up by hand than among sucklings. Figures are difficult to get upon this point in our own country, and so I shall borrow some from France. In that country there are Foundling Hospitals, where infants are taken from their mothers soon after birth, and brought up in various ways. A number of years ago some inquiries were made as to the mortality among these infants, with the result of showing that it varied very much with the mode of feeding adopted—in other respects the children being equally well cared for. For example, at Lyons, where the children were given at once to wet-nurses in the country, 33 per cent died under one year old. In Paris, where they stayed much longer in the hospitals, and were usually but not invariably suckled, 50 per cent died ; at Rheims, where

they stayed about as long as in Paris, but were not suckled, 64 per cent died; and at another hospital where they were not suckled 80 per cent died. Of course these figures are much in excess of the death-rate in private life; but the fact remains that in proportion as we depart from the food supplied by nature for the infant so does its risk of sickness and death increase. No language can be too strong to characterise those who, for mere idleness or love of pleasure, risk their children's lives by denying them their natural food. This, however, is not the case among the working people of Manchester: there the difficulty comes in a different form—I mean the employment of the mothers in factories. I will give you, in a few words, a picture of what is far too common here. A couple get married, far too young and inexperienced—often hardly, if at all, out of their teens—being enabled to do so by the joint earnings of the pair. In due time a child is born—meaning, of course, more expense. The husband's wages are insufficient to bear this, and so the mother must go back to work as soon as she can. The baby is left to the care of a relative or hired stranger, and has to be fed in the mother's absence. Either from carelessness or from wrong ideas on the subject the infant is given food quite unsuited to its digestive powers. It soon becomes ill, and while it feeds eagerly and greedily it continues to waste away, and finally, unless a change be made, it dies. If the mother continue to suckle it, it is apt to lie at the breast all night, getting very little real nourishment, and exhausting the mother, who goes to her daily toil unrefreshed and weary. When other children come—as they often do too quickly—the same thing goes on. The husband's wages are still too small, or he has got so accustomed to the idea that his wife must go out to work that the surplus is spent in other ways. This state of things must be familiar to you all, and is responsible for a great waste of infant life and health in Manchester. The only complete remedy for it lies, for the future, in the hands of the young women. They should refuse to marry unless the proposed husband is earning enough by his own work to maintain a household. But we have to do with things as they are now, not as they will be; and I have no hesitation in saying that, even in the existing circumstances, if a proper mode of feeding were adopted many lives might be saved. One difficulty is to get persons of sufficient intelligence and trustworthiness to look after the children. To meet this difficulty, there are in many of the manufacturing towns of France what are called *Crèches*, or day nurseries for children of mothers

who are obliged to go out to work. Such institutions, if properly managed, would do good here. They ought not to be too large, as evils might arise from having too many children together; and they ought to be near the factories, so that, where it is deemed advisable, the mothers might have the opportunity of suckling their infants at meal times. They ought not to be charities, too much being already done to pauperise the working classes. I am sure mothers would willingly pay at least as much as they now have to give to some old woman to mind their babies. The *Crèche* ought to be under medical supervision, as well as proper lay direction. A day nursery for the children of widows exists in Manchester, and a few others have been tried by kind-hearted ladies, but the trial has not been extensive enough.

To resume, then. A child should be suckled by its mother. If possible, this should be its only food for six months, and its chief food for nine or ten months. It should then, as a rule, be weaned. If it has to be fed under the age of six months, then it should only have cow's milk, diluted with water, sweetened with a little sugar, and added to this about two or three table-spoonfuls of lime-water to the pint. In town milk it will be sufficient to add about one part of water to two parts of milk, and after six months the infant may take the milk without dilution. Sometimes the fresh cow's milk, especially in towns, does not agree well. In such a case condensed milk is often useful for a time. If neither should agree, seek medical advice. Until six months old the child should not have bread, corn-flour, arrowroot, or other farinaceous foods. Up to three or four months old it cannot digest them, and for some months afterwards can only do so imperfectly. The practice of giving such foods too early is one of the greatest errors in feeding infants, and the cause of many deaths. After six months old, a meal may be given, once or twice a day, of well-made oatmeal gruel, bread and milk, rusks, or some other suitable food. If the infant cannot be suckled at all, the same principles must guide you. For six months give only the milk and water, with lime-water. Should this disagree—which, if properly given, it very seldom does—the condensed milk should be tried for a time, and usually answers very well. I do not, however, think it good to bring up a child entirely upon it. It contains too much sugar, the amount varying from 35 to 50 per cent, and it fattens children more than it strengthens them, because the sugar makes fat, but the bone and muscle forming elements are in too small a proportion. I have often seen children grow

plump upon it, but they seem to want the power of withstanding illness. After six or eight months the child may be fed, just as in the case of the suckling, once or twice a day, with oatmeal gruel, or bread and milk, or some of the prepared foods sold in the shops, such as Dr. Ridge's, Liebig's, Mellin's, and others.

The diet, up to the completion of teething—say the age of two years or more—should consist mainly of milk, and foods made with milk. Occasionally a little meat gravy or plain soup, or a fresh-laid egg, may be given. All through the succeeding years of childhood the diet should be plain and wholesome, milk still entering largely into it. Do not give children highly-spiced foods, pickles, pastry, &c., and let stimulants be unknown to them. I am quite sure that children in health are far better without beer or wine. And, among other things, let me urge upon you the great value of oatmeal and entire wheatmeal in the dietary of childhood. They are better than white bread and ordinary farinaceous foods, because they contain in a larger proportion the elements that go to form bone, and muscle, and brain. I am sure if they were more used we should see less rickety deformity and fewer of those diseases of bones and joints which are so fearfully common here.

I have dwelt a little longer on this branch of my subject because I am convinced of its great importance. Many of the fatal illnesses of infancy are in reality due to improper feeding, but come disguised under other names. For instance, most attacks of convulsions are due to this cause.* Again, a large proportion of the illnesses of early childhood are set down to teething—especially such as diarrhœa, convulsions, and skin eruptions. Now this is an entire mistake. The period of teething is one during which many changes are taking place in the digestive organs of the child, to fit it for change of food, weaning, &c.; and it is then that errors of diet are most common, and produce the

* The following extract from the *Food Journal* of April 1, 1871, is interesting as bearing upon this point: "An interesting report has just been presented by the Registrar-General of Scotland, which contains some valuable remarks by Dr. Stark on the different habits and results of feeding practised on babies. The English cram their babies with spoon diet almost directly after they are born, while the Scotch give nothing but mother's milk till the child begins to cut its teeth. The statistics of infant mortality show that in England there were 23,198 deaths from convulsions out of 786,858 children under one year of age, or one in every 34, whereas in Scotland only 312 died from the same cause out of 115,514 children—that is to say about one in every 370."

gravest results. If children be fed properly, teething will seldom make them ill.

Let me end this part with one or two general remarks. Accustom children from the very beginning to regularity in feeding, as in all else. Good habits cannot be formed too early. A baby at the breast should be nursed about every two hours at first, lengthening the intervals to three or four hours as it gets older. At night it should have it less frequently. Usually the breast is given too often. Whenever the child cries it is supposed to be hungry, and is therefore nursed or fed. Now if it be before the proper time it cannot be hunger that causes the infant to cry—most probably it is pain from indigestion, and we make matters worse by putting more food into the stomach. The same observation applies to children who are brought up by hand.

Again, never give children *bits* and *supps* of “what is going,” as mothers express it. Such things cannot do any good, and very often do serious mischief—and yet the custom is almost universal, as is also the giving to older children cakes and sweets between meals.

Finally, most mothers and nurses are much too fond of giving medicine to infants and young children, especially with an idea that they will help them in teething. Now, I repeat that a healthy child, properly fed and cared for, does not become ill from cutting its teeth; and if a child did become ill from this cause, teething powders and similar drugs would never help on the natural process, or do any good to the child. The same remark applies to soothing syrups, cordials, &c., which are so much used, and do untold mischief. If a child does not rest, it must be suffering, or ill. You must seek the cause of this, and remove it if you can. If you fail yourself get competent medical advice, but do not drug your child with opiates.

CLOTHING, CLEANLINESS, ETC.

The human body is constantly taking in fresh material, such as food and air, to supply the waste of the tissues and to keep up the vital heat. The waste matter, on the other hand, is got rid of by certain important organs—the skin, lungs, kidneys, &c. From the skin, by means of small pores, said to number about two millions, a constant exhalation is going on in an invisible form, which under severe exercise becomes visible in what we call perspiration. If the pores

get choked up with dirt the skin cannot do its work well, and other organs have extra work to do in the effort to get rid of waste matter. From this cause we get eruptions on the skin, disorders of other organs from over-work, and possibly derangement of the whole system from imperfect discharge of waste. Hence the great importance of personal cleanliness. An infant must have its daily bath, or, better still, a morning bath in the water, and an evening washing. At first the bath must be warm—a little warmer than new milk—and gradually cooler as the child gets older. The habit of the bath should be continued as long as possible, and with older children, where a bath may be impossible, sponging with cool or cold water should be done every morning. Besides the gain in cleanliness, water applied to the body is a splendid tonic, hardening the frame and warding off disease.

The air breathed out from the lungs contains waste matter, chiefly in the form of watery vapour and carbonic acid gas. The latter is a poison, and renders this air unfit to be breathed over again. In the same way the atmosphere is spoiled for breathing by gas, candles, and all other burning. This foul air must be got rid of, or health will soon be lost, especially in children, who are much more seriously affected than adults. As too little attention is paid to ventilation in our houses, many children get into bad health, or even become consumptive, without the true cause being suspected. Often when I go into bedrooms, even among the better classes, the air is hardly breathable. People are so afraid to open the window in a sick room, and yet there it is most of all necessary. With a little care draughts can always be avoided. The means of ventilation in ordinary houses are, practically, doors, windows, and chimneys. Miss Nightingale, a great authority on this matter, says "Doors were made to shut, windows to open." Opening the door is not enough to renew the air of a room. At best you only get the air from the rest of the house, which is not quite pure, whereas the window communicates directly with the outer air. All the windows in the house should be opened at the top every morning, and as much at other times as possible. Especially is this necessary in sleeping-rooms, where children live more than in any other room of the house. There is a very simple means of ventilating by the window, without draught, which you can all use. Get a board as long as the window is wide, and fitting it as exactly as possible. This board may be from 4 to 6 inches wide. Then raise the lower sash of the window, and place the board under, so

that the sash rests upon it. You will then see that a free space is left at the middle of the window, between the upper and lower sashes. This space will admit the outer air freely, and in such a way that the air is first directed upwards into the room. Then, being heavier than the warmer air of the room, it descends and becomes diffused in it without any direct draught. Chimneys are a valuable means of getting rid of foul air, and ought never to be stuffed up, as is too frequently done. When there is a fire in the grate the ventilating power of the chimney is much increased.

The want of attention to ventilation would do more harm, perhaps, were it not that houses are so badly built that people get ventilated in spite of themselves. But this is not exactly what we want. We wish as much fresh air as possible in our houses, without draughts or chill, for air may be warm as well as pure.

In the *Clothing* of children there are a few essential points to be attended to. It must be warm, as the young are even more susceptible to outer cold than adults; and porous, so as to permit the free passage of the exhalations from the skin, of which I have spoken. Flannel fulfils these two requirements better than any other material. In the next place, the clothing should nowhere be tight either on body or limbs, for it must not hinder the circulation of the blood or the movements of respiration. It should, further, not only allow for the free movements of the various organs but for their growth. In the case of little babies we have not much to complain of, unless perhaps the unnecessary length of their garments, for they are at least kept warm. But a grave error is usually made in clothing children from one to three or four years old—I mean the fashion of low-necked dresses and short sleeves, with very bare legs—a fashion absurd and dangerous in such a climate as ours. It exposes the most sensitive parts of the chest to cold, and is the cause of many fatal illnesses, particularly bronchitis and other inflammatory chest affections. The feeling of mothers and nurses in favour of this style of dress is very strong, and one has to wage constant war against it. It is the fashion—they think it pretty—and they do not want to listen to a doctor croaking about bronchitis. Now, without doubt, the limbs of a healthy child are beautiful objects. Indeed I should go even farther, and say that a child without any clothing at all is more beautiful than one with any style of dress whatever. But in this country we must dress our children, and it is surely quite possible to make their clothing at all ages becoming, and at the same time amply protective. People have also an idea that they can make

their children hardy by this kind of exposure, pointing out to us fine-looking children rolling about half naked in the gutters. But they overlook the fact that these are the survivors, living and thriving by reason of unusual strength, while far more are killed off by this hardening process. The true way to make your children hardy is to let them be as much in the open air as possible, but well clad and protected against cold and wet. Take also great care that they are well shod, for wet stockings are even worse than bare feet.

The underclothing of children should be changed frequently, and they ought not to wear the same under garment at night as they do during the day.

EXERCISE AND RECREATION.

In the child the question of exercise assumes a slightly different form to that in which it presents itself in the adult. In the latter a certain amount of exercise is necessary for the maintenance of health—the kind of it must be dependent on the nature of his work—and if his work be physical his recreation may be purely mental. In the case of a child more physical exercise is necessary, because we have not merely to maintain its health, but to secure the fullest development and growth of all the parts of the body. I read some time ago an account by an army surgeon of the results of the three months' gymnastic training to which recruits were subjected, and was surprised at the amount of good obtained. The gain in weight, in muscular power, and particularly in chest circumference, was in all cases very marked, and in some almost beyond what I should have thought possible in adults. You can easily understand how great the influence of exercise must be upon the health and growth of a child. The child contains within himself all the germs of the perfect man, all the organs are there in miniature, but their full development depends upon how they are called into action, or exercised. Nature, wise in all things, ordains that where power is most needed there it is given in increased measure. Thus, if a certain muscle or set of muscles be frequently used, they grow larger, firmer, and proportionately more powerful. By the nature of a man's work this special development of certain muscles is often produced, as we see in the arm of a blacksmith, while others less used remain comparatively small and feeble. In children, however, we should aim as much as possible at an evenly balanced development, at obtaining the highest average of power, and if any

arts are specially weak, endeavouring by suitable exercise to bring them to a level with the others. On the other hand care must be taken not to carry the exercise of any set of muscles to over-fatigue, or then we may have degeneration and wasting of those muscles. Exercise, to do good, must be regular, must be as varied as possible, and not carried to over-fatigue. Exercise benefits the system generally—first, by increasing the breathing power, thus getting rid of carbonic acid and purifying the blood; secondly, by increasing the action of the heart it quickens the whole of the vital processes, renewing the tissues and removing the products of their waste. The digestive powers are, in consequence, increased. All the good effects of exercise are much more marked when it is carried on in the open air.

Few things are more delightful than to watch the gradual unfolding of the powers and faculties of infant life. It all seems so natural. And yet it is really the result of a kind of training, consisting of spontaneous efforts on the child's part, and of help or direction from its elders. For instance, it is only after many trials that it learns to have an idea of distance. At first it will try to seize things far beyond its reach. In the same way, long after a child is able to bear its weight it has to make many efforts before it attains the power of balancing necessary for standing alone, and still more the art of walking. In some hot countries, where the people spend much of their time in the water, it is said that the children can swim almost as soon as they can walk. They are both arts, and have to be learnt by the child, just as we should have to learn skating, bicycling, or any other accomplishment that seems so natural and easy when well done.

The natural delight of a healthy child in movement, and the strong development of the imitative faculty, are sufficient in the early years to insure all the variety of muscular movement that is needed. What we have to do is to allow them full scope. The clothing, as I have said, while warm, should leave their limbs untrammelled. Sir William Jenner says, "A child in health delights in movements of every kind. It joys to exercise every muscle. Strip a child of a few months old and see how it throws its limbs in every direction. It will raise its head from the place on which it lies, coil itself round, and grasping a foot with both hands, thrust it into its mouth as far as possible, as though the great object of its existence at that moment was to turn itself inside out." Young infants should therefore be often laid down with freed limbs, so that they can kick and toss about to their heart's content. When they get

a little older allow them to crawl and roll about as much as possible. Next they will begin to walk with a hold, and finally, the first grand accomplishment of infant life, to walk without holding on. One caution I must give here. Mothers and nurses are far too anxious to get children on their feet. It would be much better if they left the child to its natural impulses. All healthy children will walk, and a few months one way or another are of no consequence. The disinclination of a child to go about on its feet at the usual age is Nature's warning. The child's bones are too soft—are wanting in the lime which hardens them—and forcing it to walk results in crooked legs. The difficulty I have found in such cases is most often in the other direction. I have not been able to keep them from walking until the bones had grown hard enough to bear their weight without bending.

As the child grows a little older he should be encouraged to engage in games by which the greatest variety of muscles are exercised, such as play with hoops, balls, skipping-ropes, &c., and all this should be as much in the open air and sunlight as possible. This is a great difficulty in the case of town children. Too often they have only the streets to play in, where the air is not good enough, and they are exposed to accidents from vehicles. Our public parks are good, but they are too few and too far off. We want more open spaces in our densely-peopled city, which, together with the playgrounds of schools, might give town children the chance of safe open-air playing, and getting as much as possible the sunlight which is so powerful in health giving.

Although the body is not so much under the influence of the mind and feelings in childhood as in later years, still these do exert a marked power; and therefore if we are to have healthy children we must make them happy by all the means we possess. In our hospitals devoted to sick children we recognise this fact. We give our little patients plenty of fresh air, plenty of light, place bright pictures on the walls and flowers on the tables, and we have picture-books and toys for those who can use them. These, with cheerful faces and kindly words, help them to bear their sufferings in a way that is wonderful, and to turn the balance in favour of health. And if such things help the sick, they are equally important for maintaining health and increasing strength in those who are well. We must therefore in our homes bring as much brightness into the lives of children as we can. Cheap pleasures give as much delight to children as expensive ones, and therefore all can afford to do something of this. Music does

children great good in many ways, and a mother or nurse who can sing adds to her children's happiness. For this reason, and also because singing is a valuable exercise for strengthening the lungs, it should be taught to all. Even the organ grinders, who are such a nuisance to us grown-up people, may be looked upon occasionally with a kindly eye for the sake of the pleasure they give to children.

The age at which a child goes to school must vary with its home circumstances and physical strength, but I am strongly inclined to agree with the old feeling that no book-learning, as a rule, should be done before the age of seven. Much earlier, however, they may go to infant schools, especially those conducted on the Kindergarten system, where the faculties and senses are trained by objects and by amusing work and play in which all the children join.

Up to the school-going age, boys and girls are on a very equal footing in the matter of play, but afterwards the advantage is apt to be more and more on the side of the boys. In this country the games of boys are happily such as to give a large amount and variety of physical exercise; and in many cases, especially with country boys, nothing more is necessary. In towns there are also gymnasiums in the public parks, and many of the schools. These should be much used, but only under the supervision of a master, to prevent improper or over-violent exertions. They are very valuable, if properly directed, for strengthening any part that is especially weak, as, for example, if a child is narrow chested or weak in the back. In the same light we may regard drilling, the use of Indian clubs, dumb-bells, &c.

Girls, as they grow older, are less fortunate than boys in the matter of free exercise at play. Their dress is one difficulty. It ought to allow full play to the movements of limbs and body; and, among other things, stays should be done away with altogether. They are not only useless but injurious. I do not ask that girls should be made as rough as boys, but a little infusion of that roughness would do no harm morally, and would certainly improve their physical health. In that sense mixed schools of girls and boys may do good. Gymnastic exercises suited to girls may serve to supply what is wanting in active open-air play, but cannot take its place.

One difficulty of school life is to decide how much time is to be given to work and how much to play. I cannot enter now into this question; but I am quite sure that now-a-days we are running

a serious risk of expecting too much school-work of young children, especially if they are not quick of study. They have not enough of time left for recreation. Cases of failing health from this cause have repeatedly come before me professionally, and have required either entire cessation of studies or cutting off some of them. Health must be considered first and mental education second. If the first be enfeebled the teacher's object is defeated, for the mind of a child cannot long remain vigorous if the body become weak. Just as parents take a pride in noticing and helping on the mental acquirements of their children, so should they take a pride in their physical strength and activity.

One form of exercise I would particularly refer to before I finish, because it is so valuable and yet so very much neglected—I mean swimming. I trust the time is not far distant when it will be deemed a necessary part of education, but at present the bath accommodation for all classes is miserably insufficient. Hardly any exercise is so valuable for the development of the muscular system, for expanding the chest, and bracing the whole body. It also adds to a child's courage and self-reliance, not to mention its value as a means of saving life. It has further the great merit of being equally available for boys and girls. In the ruins of Rome, and other ancient cities, we find ample evidence of the great importance which the Romans and Greeks, in their palmyest days, attached to bathing, putting to shame any of our modern cities. These races admired beauty and strength, and studied and practised the best means of obtaining them.

Let me end then as I began, by saying that each one entrusted with the care of a child has a responsibility, not only as regards the child's present welfare, but its future. If you so act as to give your children, in the highest degree possible, health of body and of mind, they will have cause to bless you far more than if you could endow them with money or lands.