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Editorial.

SCHOOL HYGIENE.

It is a significant sign of the times that so much attention is now being paid to the health of school children, because all who are acquainted with the subject are aware of the urgent need which exists for radical improvements in this direction. It seems so obvious as to require no argument that children who are in ill-health require attention; that they cannot possibly obtain any advantages, while in that condition, from the best organised systems of education; that, from the earliest times, it has been recognised as an axiom that the healthy mind demands a healthy body; and that the future welfare of the race depends upon the care and attention paid to the physique of the children of to-day. All this is self-evident when it is baldly stated; but, like many other self-evident facts, until quite recently, these have been more or less generally ignored, and the children of the nation have been dragged up anyhow, regardless of the surroundings in which their education was carried on, more or less regardless of the many infirmities from which they might be suffering, as if the nation at large was not responsible, and as if the nation at large would not eventually suffer from such neglect.

All thoughtful people, therefore, will welcome the underlying reasons for the International Congress on School Hygiene, which will meet at the London University from August 5th to 10th. The first meeting of this body was held at Nuremberg in 1904, and the object of the Congress is to discuss the results of experiments made in various countries to improve the conditions under which children work, to suggest new improvements and developments, and to give the whole subject a definite and scien-

tific form. The Congress will be divided into eleven Sections, and its work falls practically into four divisions; (1) the best methods of training for the minds and bodies of healthy children; (2) the care of children defective in mind or body; (3) the medical inspection of schools, and the systematic instruction of teachers as well as children in the laws of health; (4) the provision of residential schools and the best methods of building and equipping schools. School camps, country schools for town children, the play, food, sleep, and every detail of children's health will be discussed.

The Congress is fortunate in possessing in its President, Sir Lauder Brunton, a physician who is well known to be eminently practical as well as eminently scientific, a rare combination to which few attain. He is known to attach much importance to the careful medical inspection of children at school, and has pointed out that many of the apparent mental drawbacks of children are explainable by physical defects which can be easily remedied if taken in their early stages. For example, children who are considered by their teachers to be hopelessly "stupid" have frequently been found to be suffering from some form of defective eyesight. On the other hand, much of the ill-health from which school-children suffer has been traced to decayed teeth or enlarged tonsils or adenoids. The natural result in the first case is that they are unable to read easily or to follow instruction given on the black-board; and, in the second, that they are stunted in growth of mind and body as a natural consequence of their illness. Formerly, even if the teachers were aware of the cause for the child's ill-health—and it is probable that in most instances the facts were unknown—they had no opportunity of suggesting a remedy or taking

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