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"Nature's Gift from the Sunny South"

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FARM LEAGUE AND PLAY GROUND ASSOCIATION.

Address Delivered by Dr. Moss, President of the School Board, Before the Teachers' Institute in Lafayette Last Thursday.

I desire to present for your consideration as teachers two important activities in connection with present day school life, that are being carried on and emphasized by the International Children's School Farm League and the Playground Association of America. To-morrow I shall talk to you about School Hygiene, or Schools as Safeguards to Public Health, with special reference to tuberculosis.

The International Children's School Farm League has for its object the practical teaching of the value of sunlight and fresh air, and this is accomplished by giving children the opportunity of contact with living plants and Mother Earth.

It is the purpose of the organization to furnish practical information, opportunity for mutual help, and to urge the introduction of Children's Gardens into school and park systems, as well as under private control. And to this end the league urges the employment of teachers trained for Children's Garden work, and maintains a bureau from which issue information and advice on how to start and conduct gardens, and furnishes lecturers and printed matter, and also provides photographs and lantern slides.

A personal visit recently to one of the school farms maintained by this league in New York City convinced me of the undoubted utility and educational value of this kind of work. The teacher in charge of this farm possessed the art of making the work not only interesting, but highly instructive and useful to the children. The farm garden course is supplemented with the elementary technical instruction in agriculture and nature study; and the physical, mental and moral results obtained through this combination of out-door work with out-door play warrant most strongly the general adoption and unlimited extension of this branch of social and educational effort. Good results are obtained PHYSICALLY because work, and above all, work in the open, is healthy and strengthening; MENTALLY, because in showing the children how much they can accomplish by their own efforts, you are giving them the best incentive towards further effort in their work and studies; MORALLY, because the child becomes imbued with that love of nature which is the most universal and inspiring of all religions.

Nature study is necessary to the proper development of the whole child, and it has a good influence upon school work in general. Furthermore the interest of the pupils in the school garden leads them to plant and care for flowers and vegetables in their own homes, with consequent beneficial results. Thus it may be seen that the school garden is bound to be of the greatest value, ethically and economically, to our school life, and so I commend the school garden or school farm to your earnest consideration, and trust that you will all become actively interested in an extension of this excellent movement which is capable of accomplishing so much toward keeping the boy on the farm, by giving him some knowledge of scientific and intensive cultivation without which it is well nigh futile to attempt to hold in the country the farmer's child, or induce families to abandon

the restrictions and the drudgery of town and city life to engage in the invigorating and highly useful occupation of farming with brains as well as with hands. And I wish to emphasize the point right here that the farmer, on account of the very important position he occupies as the provider of the storehouse of the world should be the best educated and best informed man of his day.

The post-office address of the International Children's School Farm League, is 29 West 56th St., New York City. The name of the president and founder of the league is Mrs. Henry Parsons, whom it has been my pleasure to meet in person. She is an enthusiast on the subject of school farms, and is devoting her life and her wealth to the promotion of this work. Mrs. Parsons will gladly answer all inquiries addressed to her in this connection.

I shall speak, in the next place, concerning "purposeful playing."

The Playground Association of America is organized for the purpose of securing for all children their natural birthright—play—under natural conditions and elevating leadership. Its scope is as broad as the impulse for play is universal.

Deprived of the opportunity to play even though surrounded with luxury, a child becomes abnormal—often times physically or mentally deficient, and still more morally deficient. Playgrounds in towns and cities not only afford amusement and benefit to children, but also become social centers where entire families receive benefit and pleasure.

Joseph Lee stated a great truth when he said that "the thing that most needs to be understood about play is that it is not a luxury but a necessity. It is not simply something that a child likes to have; it is something that he must have if he is ever to grow up. It is more than an essential part of his education; it is an essential part of the law of his growth, of the process by which he becomes a man at all. "The universal impulse to play" says another well-known philanthropist, "is a divinely ordered thing. If God gives instinct, man ought to provide the playground."

So much emphasis has been placed upon the necessity and value of playgrounds in crowded city conditions, that the rural significance and application of the movement for play and playgrounds may scarcely have found lodgment in the minds of most of us.

Yet just as we have found out that city playgrounds are for more than "breathing spaces" or even play spaces where the youngsters may have a good time, and that they may have their direct bearing on educational problems, juvenile delinquency, health, and assimilation of immigrant population, so we are beginning to recognize the social import of the movement for organized play in the country.

The attention which is being directed toward the problem of city congestion has led to a keener appreciation of the importance of making conditions of village and rural life more interesting and attractive. If country districts can share in some

of the values and opportunities which ordinarily accompany our city civilization, it is reasonable to suppose that the drift cityward may in some degree be lessened. In a work written by him on this subject Dr. Scudder points out the increasing influence of the telephone, the trolley, the rural free delivery, and similar agencies. Yet present conditions in the average rural community leave many human cravings unsatisfied, and these are the very cravings that are strongest in youth, when the monotony of farm drudgery or the unchanging routine of village life are especially irksome. To meet this problem Dr. Scudder shows that pleasant recreation and social intercourse may be effectively promoted by expressing the play spirit in field days and festivals of play and sport.

The work of organizing and arousing interest in a country school athletic league, and of managing a yearly field day, is so concretely outlined in this book of Dr. Scudder, that any energetic person with a group of helpers should be able to adopt the plan to a given locality. The purpose of the day is to have active play and participation in stirring occupations, avoid clap-trap devices for amusement, and let the occasion be simply a gathering of the clans for a joyous day of play in the open air.

Thomas Carlyle said there is a gregarious sheep-like tendency in mankind to flock together and have a leader, and this tendency is first manifested in childhood. And this, of course, means the game—it means play. You can not keep children from flocking together; neither should you. The responsible parent who thinks to solve the problem by keeping the boy away from his fellows is more likely to develop a molly coddle or a milk sop. We want wholesome, vigorous citizens, with rich, red blood in their veins. They are to be recruited alone from our children. Our duty, then, is not to suppress, but to afford under the best environment that the State can provide, the opportunity for wholesome association and helpful expression of natural instincts; and one of the aims of the Playground Association of America is to encourage state playground legislation and provide model courses in playground administration for normal schools and summer schools. Play being a fundamental need, playgrounds should be provided for every child as much as schools.

The Playground Association of America is rendering a superb service to the country, for it is insuring to its future citizens the fine physique and alert minds that go to form the highest and best type of mankind.

Stevenson, the poet wrote: "Happy hearts and happy faces, Happy play in grassy places, That was how in ancient ages Children grew to kings and sages."

We need the sages and the kinglike men more than ever, therefore let all who can do so give aid and encouragement to the good and grand work of purposeful playing. It is the privilege of the public school teacher to have a part in this practical work for social and civic betterment, and I urge the teachers assembled here to get in sympathetic touch with the Playground Association of America. Their address is 624 Madison Avenue, City of New York.

I have not been able to do more in this brief presentation of this great movement, than to deal with the subject in a very general way. I earnestly trust, however, that what I have said regarding these two forceful fac-

THANKSGIVING SERVICE.

The public is cordially invited to be present at the Thanksgiving service at the Methodist Church on Thursday, Nov. 27, at 11 a. m. The Rev. Stewart, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, will preach the sermon. Special music has been prepared. Everybody is invited. Free seats and a hearty welcome. The following is the program.

Doxology—
Invocation—Rev. C. C. Miller.
Chorus—America.
Proclamation—Read by Dr. E. L. Stephens.
Quartet—Miss Wise, Mr. Cairus, Mrs. Girard, Mr. Stewart.
Scripture Reading—Rev. J. I. Kendrick.
Duet—Mrs. Embry, Miss Embry.
Prayer—Rev. J. I. Kendrick.
Solo—Mrs. Crow Girard.
Sermon—Rev. E. M. Stewart.
Chorus—"The Lord is Great."
Benediction.

tors in American school life has sufficiently impressed this body of teachers to cause them to take up seriously some definite work along the lines I have indicated; and I feel sure that you will not fail to respond to this plea in behalf of the driving of children who must look to their teachers for guidance in whatever concerns their welfare.

FELL AND BROKE LEG.

W. R. Ellis, of Abbeville, a fruit tree salesman, about 60 years old, while in Broussard Tuesday, fell in stepping off the sidewalk and broke his leg, both bones, above the ankle. He was attended by Dr. DeLaurel. Mrs. Ellis was summoned and she came and returned home with her husband Wednesday.

The place to get quick service is Bernard & Meaux—give them an order for groceries.

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