

THE GOSPEL OF PLAY

Those Who Love and Pity Shut-In Children Start Things; States and Congress Keep Them Going—Play Vs. Crime.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.
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Pittsburg, Pa., Dec. 3.—When the Pittsburg playgrounds association asked last spring for a bond issue of \$250,000 for purchasing and equipping new playgrounds, it exemplified the modern tendency toward outdoor life and playgrounds which has become one of the biggest factors in the great uplift. Though the request was denied, its promoters are not discouraged and expect to put the matter through next spring. Two months ago the South Hills board of trade met in the Pittsburg chamber of commerce and passed a resolution recommending that the general assembly of the state pass an act "imposing upon boroughs and first-class townships, and upon the purchase of sufficient acreage for a commons, these lands to be particularly for the sports and athletics of children." A committee of seven will urge this before the legislature.

One hundred and seventy cities of 5000 inhabitants and over in the United States now have playground systems. Before the new year is very old the number will have approximated 300. Pittsburg's system is one of the best, and the work is notable because of the adverse geographical conditions overcome. In urging the need for more playing centers the association has made photographs of hundreds of backyards where some children have to play, showing the impossibility of the thing. Jacob Hill is authority for the statement that Pittsburg has more congested districts than even New York's celebrated tenement quarters, proving the necessity for as many playing places as the city can provide. Though the big tenements are lacking here, Pittsburg has more dwellers to the acre-space in some of its smaller buildings than New York has in its tenements. It is for the purpose of giving playing places to the children of such districts that the association exists.

Playground Idea's Evolution.
In the yard of the Forbes school of Pittsburg several philanthropic members of the civic club found 50 discontented children, one day 12 years ago, and decided to teach them how to play. The children were divided in two groups, trained teachers were secured, and plays and games were taught them. For a few years the experiment was watched and then, because of the bigness of the thing, a permanent organization was planned. It was perfected in the winter of 1905. Last year the central board of education gave \$7,500 for the work, and the councils appropriated \$50,000 for parks to be disbursed by the association. Such, in brief, is the history of almost every city's playgrounds. First, they have been opened by private organizations, usually women's clubs, and then when their value became known they have been incorporated in the educational work, or the parks systems, or given over to a distinct organization such as Pittsburg has. Last summer Pittsburg had six recreation parks open for eight weeks in addition to the vacation schools. Some of the arts were taught, gardens were made, and in the smaller children's grounds trained kindergarten teachers were in charge. Every Friday flowers were distributed to the children at the schools, parks and playgrounds. The total daily attendance in the vacation schools, parks and playgrounds this year was over 4400.

More Play; Less Crime.
According to President Roosevelt, the biggest civic achievement in the world is Chicago's South Side playground. More than \$10,000,000 has been invested there. Chicago has found, as Denver has, that there is a strong relation between juvenile courts and playgrounds. The more playgrounds there are where children can be kept from mischief, the fewer are the delinquents. Wherever a park or a recreation center has been opened in Chicago there has been a decrease of 8 per cent in juvenile delinquency in the district. Chicago's noted playground feature is to be a circulating library branch on each ground. From the immigrant population of this country can be learned one of the best lessons in proper festival celebrations. Where the independence day celebration of America is usually a carnival of noise and disaster, foreigners in big cities celebrate the days dear to their hearts with processions and folk dances in public parks. Last May 1,000 Norwegians celebrated in Chicago the independence day of their fatherland in Fumboldt park, a procession of 10,000 children leading the way. The Swedish and Hungarian festivals are celebrated in a like fashion. This popularizes the parks and playing centers. Reverence for fatherland traditions is considered a strong argument for good citizenship in America.

New York's Recreation Fund.
Every year New York sets aside \$200,000 for playgrounds and \$1,000,000 for small parks. Without counting parks of less than one acre, New York's parks and playgrounds are valued at figures beyond \$500,000,000, the last valuation of Central park being nearly half of this. In old New York the park and playground acreage is 1,444, an acre for every group of 1,444 people. The recreation pier on the New York docks cost \$50,000 for music alone, last year. There is a plan now on foot to place a herd of Jersey cattle in Central park, and give the milk to the children who play there.

In Boston where the more courageous children played on the common years ago, an addition of 200 acres was recently made to the children's playgrounds. The first recorded sand garden for American children was started there in 1835. In Boston harbor there is an island to which municipal boats furnished free transportation to 14,000 children under 13 last summer. At the last session of the Massachusetts legislature a law was passed requiring a referendum on the question of providing playgrounds in all cities or towns of 10,000 population, 51 places in all, and the school committee of Boston has voted \$58,000 on its playgrounds, and to this the park department has added \$25,000 more. So much for progress in New England, where two centuries ago playing was deemed a sin.

Congress Takes Notice.
Newark's municipal camp is one of the biggest lessons in juvenile helpfulness. The city owns a tract of eleven acres at Avon-by-the-sea, and over 2000 children were given outings there last summer. Trenton began the first work of this kind last spring with a modest \$1500. The old city reservoir, long neglected and in ruins, was transformed into a stadium, making one of the most unique and picturesque playgrounds in the country. That it was needed is proved by the summer's attendance, 12,600.

When playgrounds for the city of Washington were first proposed, a clever congressman is said to have suggested that such a useless waste of money could be prevented by buying a lot of cheap balloons and releasing them on the Washington House grounds every Saturday afternoon—that this would really do the children more good than any other play. The next day when they had burst, signed

other plans. There are now ten municipal and thirteen school playgrounds in that city, with an attendance for last summer of over 275,000. Each playground was at first the charge of some private philanthropy and later was adopted as a municipal enterprise. Playground promoters there have an eye on reclaimed and made lands for future parks, the land made from ashes having superior drainage.

Western Playground System.
The state of Washington has excelled all 29 of the states that attended the second congress of the Playground Association of America in New York last September. The legislature passed a bill there at its last session—though it was vetoed—requiring that every city, when laid out, should set aside ten per cent of its land for parks and playgrounds. The bill will come up again. In California the annual sum over playgrounds is at its height. Nearly a million and a half dollars has been set aside in that state for playgrounds. San Francisco, with the great burden of rebuilding, set aside \$741,000 of this, Oakland \$500,000, Berkeley \$500,000 and Alameda \$125,000, while Los Angeles has one of the finest systems in all the country.

In 1899 the will of the Smiles of Philadelphia gave a house and playground in Mount Park to the children of the city. It was the first public playground in this country, and it has never been closed for a single day. Over 700,000 children have played there, and a complete hospital equipment, a trained nurse, indoor playground and outdoor athletic courts make of this one of the most beneficent bequests in the history of philanthropy. Next year the school children will have 21 new playgrounds. The Department of Physical Education of the University of Missouri has organized summer plays in 21 towns and villages, and offers special training for play teachers.

Folk Tales and Old Games.
The little Chicago child of the slums who asked the lot owner: "Please, mister, may I put my feet on your grass?" has been heard, and sympathetic cities are making grass plots as fast as they can for the tired little feet. They are turning back to the older days and reviving old time games and folk dances, one time a part of the history of the various peoples. The story tells in the parks are reappearing the world of fancy with beloved figures from Robin Hood, from the old Norse sagas, from the German and Greek mythologies, and many a sin-befogged little brain is already growing clear and clean. At Chicago's play festival last year there were 2000 participants, and at New York's this year nearly as many. At the University of Tennessee summer school there was a play festival this year, and Pittsburg closed the play season with one of the most successful festivals of the time.

Cheaper and Better Than Crime.
As a preventive of disease and crime the playground is the city's biggest helper. It costs less than an epidemic or than the maintenance of hospitals, and vastly less than juvenile courts, parental schools and reformatories. Knowing this Birmingham, Knoxville, Harrisburg, Lowell, Roonoke, San Antonio and Syracuse are among this year's recruits with the inspiring example of Cleveland and its \$60,000 expenditures before them. With the play, the study and the outdoor life of the playgrounds they mean to make healthful, wholesome citizens for the future good of the nation.

SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AT EUGENE SEEK TO ABOLISH CIGARETTES

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)
Eugene, Or., Dec. 3.—The Eugene school authorities have taken up the matter of the smoking of cigarettes by the high school students. It is proposed to abolish the practice. The city authorities have been consulted in the matter and it is probable that a law prohibiting minors from smoking the "coffin snuff" will be the result of the agitation.

TIMBER-STONE ENTRIES BARRED

(United Press Leased Wire.)
Walla Walla, Wash., Dec. 3.—A telegram from the interior department to the local land office holds up all timber and stone entries until further instructions. It is believed here that the department will not permit further entries pending efforts to repeal the act in accordance with Secretary Garfield's plan to have all timber on public lands appraised and sold under supervision of the forestry service.

Lecture by Rabbi Wise.

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)
Shedds, Or., Dec. 3.—Rabbi Jonah B. Wise of Portland lectured in the United Presbyterian church at Shedds Tuesday evening, December 1, on "The Wandering Jew," to a large and appreciative audience. This was the first in a course of lectures to be given this winter arranged by Rev. H. C. Marshall, pastor of the United Presbyterian church. The next lecture will be given by State Labor Commissioner Hoff, December 28, on "The Church and Laboring Men, Past, Present and Future."
Rev. H. C. Marshall, pastor of the United Presbyterian church, will preach next Sabbath, December 6, in the First Presbyterian church, Corvallis, in the absence of the pastor, Rev. J. R. N. Bell, D. D.

Neill to Be Reappointed.

(United Press Leased Wire.)
Washington, Dec. 3.—President Roosevelt has informed Labor Commissioner Neill that he will reappoint him.

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By painting a wheel rim with a paste composed of shellac and finely powdered flake graphite, the evil effects of rust will be much lessened.

C. E. Ferguson, 6047 Normal Ave., Chicago, writes: "I want to say a word in your paper for the benefit of the ruptured. I was ruptured for 30 years and found no help until I used Dr. Rice's treatment, and then I was completely cured. There is no operation, no pain no danger of any kind and you do not lose a single day from your work. I am a painter by trade and I climbed and swung my ladders around as a painter must, but made no difference, the cure took place just the same. Dr. Rice will send a free trial of his wonderful Rupture Cure. I can write him. Don't send any money. Just fill out the coupon below and send it to Dr. W. S. Rice, 31 Main St., Adams, N. Y."

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