

# How to Bring Up Baby.

(By **HYGEIA.**)

Published under the auspices of the Society for the Health of Women and Children.

"It is wiser to put up a fence at the top of a precipice than to maintain an ambulance at the bottom."

## Our Education System.

THE following lecture was delivered by Dr. Truby King, General President of the Society for the Health of Women and Children, on certain medical aspects of education. The statement made by Dr King was primarily for the benefit of the Education Commission, but the commission invited teachers and others interested to attend.

As the lecture has a special bearing on the health of women and children, I am sure that parents will ponder over it.

## Running Counter to Law.

The speaker said that the first thing he wished to draw attention to was the grave effects which neglect of rational hygiene—the laws and needs of healthy habits and healthy living, over-study, competitive examinations, and so-called competitions—were having on the rising generation, especially on girls. He gave an address on the subject in Wellington some 18 months ago, at a large meeting of the Medical Association. What he then advanced met with the strongest endorsement, and he was pressed by his medical conferees to bring the matter before the annual meeting of the British Medical Association, which was to be held in Auckland some months later, as it was felt that the outlook and the existing conditions of education for girls needed to be radically changed in certain directions.

## The Case of Growing Girls.

At the annual general meeting in Auckland, held in March, 16 months ago, he gave an address on "The Factors Bearing on Motherhood under the Conditions of Modern Civilisation as Affecting the Race." Dr. Savage (the president) and a number of other doctors spoke in the same direction, saying how frequently they were called on in practice to deal with cases of nervous breakdown and functional irregularities of organs associated with more or less development arrest, brought on by lack of rational hygiene and injudicious and unnecessary educational stress—that is to say, arrest of proper nutrition, growth, and development, involving not only the whole organism, more or less, but failing especially on those parts of the growing girl which it is the scheme of creation to develop and expand at the very period of life when the stress of our educational system is making itself most felt. In such cases, Dr. Savage said, he was in the habit of advising that the pupil should be taken away from school for a whole year; indeed, he said he was inclined to think that were it feasible it would be a good thing for all girls if they could be relieved from the stress of ordinary education as now conducted, at this critical, expanding and rapidly-growing period of life. At the close of a long discussion the following resolution was passed unanimously:—

That the Hon. Dr. Collins, Dr. Gibbs, and Dr. King be appointed a committee to wait on the Minister of Education and represent the opinion of this conference, that it is in the highest interests of the whole community that the State should inculcate and bring about as far as feasible an ideal of education for girls which, to quote the words of Professor Stanley Hall, shall "invert the present maxim that girls should be primarily trained to independence and self-support, and that matrimony and motherhood, if it come, will take care of itself." This conference feels bound to deprecate any system of education which—under the stress of excessive mental effort, excessive competition, excessive training after so-called accomplishments, etc.—pays insufficient attention to ensuring normal, orderly, well-balanced development and complete fitness for maternity and the practical care of a home. This conference is satisfied that, broadly

speaking, even where marriage does not take place, the education which gives a girl the best all-round equipment in body, mind, morals, and inclination for home life and potential motherhood, also gives her the soundest and surest foundation for future health and happiness, and for a sustained power of earning an independent living if such should prove to be her lot.

The views of the medical profession as indicated were duly laid before the Minister of Public Health. The only thing bearing further on this matter that has transpired since was a meeting which took place early this week, in which Dr King conferred with the committee of the Medical Association in Wellington, when there was a unanimous confirmation of the conclusions arrived at previously, and certain further practical suggestions were made which the speaker was asked to represent before the Commission.

## Education As It Appeals to the Physician.

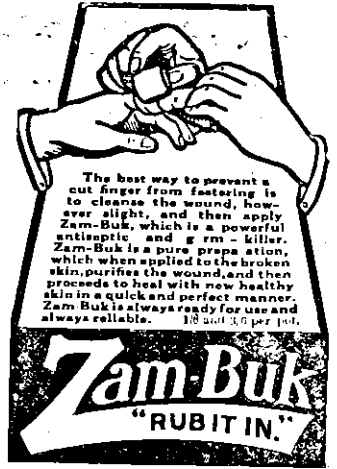
The lecturer explained that it was his intention to deal not so much with the details of ordinary education as with its broader and more essential aspects, bearing

on the development and future health and fitness of the individual, physical, mental, and moral. He was not specially concerned with immediate school results. In other words, he wished to deal with education as it appealed to the physician, and he made no apology for commencing with a few simple experiments suitable for demonstrating to a child and proving that we live at the bottom of an ocean which is just as material and substantial as the ocean in which fish live, only that the aerial fluid happens to be thinner. Ninety per cent of people did not believe that air was anything—or, at any rate, anything of importance. He could come to no other conclusion from the fact that they adored open windows, especially open bedroom windows. Education took no account of air as a food; indeed, he might almost say that the higher our education the less seemed to be the recognition of the need for a constant and abundant supply of pure air—the first of all essentials for health. Education talked glibly about carbonic acid gas and 15lbs pressure on the square inch, but it did not bring home to the child that it could live for 40 days without food, but only four minutes without air. A child could be intensely interested in such matters if they were properly presented. The books generally used in our schools for teaching physiology were utterly unfit for the purpose—indefinitely dry and filled with a mass of uninteresting and unimportant details.

Willie: "Papa, is it necessary to whip me?"

Slimson (grimly): "You ought to know."

"Well, I sometimes think you don't realise how little good it does me."



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Nurse Jenkins

(From a photo.)

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