

How to Bring Up Baby.

(By HYGIEIA.)

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

A Modern Educational Utopia.

WHATEVER opinion our readers may have formed as to the entire practicability or otherwise of the Utopia of Canon Wilson, ex-head master of Clifton College, we have no doubt that all will concur regarding the desirability of the main ideal he propounds for Boards of Education—viz., to aim to produce the healthiest, most intelligent, and best materials for the State.

Further, we shall, none of us, dispute the wisdom of any community that regards the insuring of the proper rearing of young children as "altogether the most important part of its work, and as the foundation of all the rest, not only because healthy children of six, well looked after, are such splendid material for schools and subsequent labour, but because the parents, trained in care for the children so far, are so keen to keep them afterwards in first-rate condition by securing them proper food, exercise, clothing, fresh air, and sleep. I was struck with the emphasis they laid on these essentials."

We heartily wish it could be said of ourselves in the Dominion, as Canon Wilson says of his conception of what might be:

"The belief of the people of my Utopia is that the first condition to be aimed at is the health of the body, which alone can produce health of mind. The prenatal and postnatal care of their children has become with them an absolutely primal educational axiom, as well as their pleasure and pride. They believe that any neglect of this care, with its sure consequences of weakness and disease, is virtually to make nugatory beforehand all educational and philanthropic effort which may be made for the children in later years. What these efforts are many of our teachers know. There is something infinitely pathetic in the way in which our teachers and doctors and voluntary helpers will feed and care for the poor children who have been irrevocably injured by earlier neglect in which we acquiesce (or which we don't attempt to stem).

I do not care to tell my friends in Tseonon what they would see if they visited England. Still less could we in New Zealand afford to let the Canon's Utopians know what they would come across in the way of deficient stamina, bad teeth, indigestion, appendicitis, adenoids, and consumption if they critically examined our rising generation, and how far they would find our women incapable of complete and perfect motherhood, in spite of the fact that we live in a young Dominion with ideal natural conditions for health, and without the Old World curses of overcrowding and poverty to contend against. We ought not to feel

prond of having to expend half a million sterling a year on hospitals, an expenditure incurred mainly in the imperfect patching-up of people suffering from ailments easily avoidable by the timely exercise of rational hygiene in rearing, habits, and education.

Canon Wilson continues:—
I must add that the sight of their schools and children, in contrast with the vivid memory of some of our own, filled me with fresh admiration of many of our teachers, who, in the face of the ceaseless stream of admission

into their schools of the neglected waste products of our cities, keep up heart and courage and hope, and out of such materials save a few. It is splendid, but it is not national education.

To return for one brief instant to Tseonon. Their aim throughout has been to prevent, not to palliate, nor to punish. They have so far succeeded that, though they have not abolished crime, they have practically abolished pauperism, destitution, and drunkenness. They have raised the standard of duty to children and provided a new pleasure in life. They are unanimous in attributing the industry, sobriety, happiness, and good sense of their people to the health and vigour and brotherly feeling that result from affectionate early care, and to their intelligent and religious education, and to training in the use of freedom and of responsibility and of co-operation.

I hope that this brief narrative may have suggested some defects in our national conception of the scope and aims of elementary education, and, in particular, its neglect of the earliest years of life.

The Japanese Fan.

LET me try to introduce the reader to a Japanese tea-house, says Mr William Archer in an interesting article in the "Daily News." Or I should rather say to an inn; for it appears that the term "tea-house" is not properly applied to places where you put up for the night. There are, of course, many hotels in Japan constructed and conducted in European fashion; but as soon as you leave the beaten track of the globe-trotter you must be content with the Japanese hostelry, which I am about to describe. They are all of one invariable type, though they differ very much in size, cleanliness and style of appointment.

As there are no walls to a Japanese house, there are naturally no doors. Your rickishia deposits you under some sort of porch, verandah, or shelter, and you forthwith sit down on the edge of the platform, eighteen inches high, which forms the ground floor of the building, and proceed to take off your shoes. Various "mosus" (waitresses—the word means literally "elder sister") kneel around you and make smiling obeisances almost to the ground. When your shoes are removed, and you stand on the "tatami," or mats, you are provided with heelless slippers, unless, perchance, you wear "digitated" socks, which enable you to put on the sandals of the country, with its double thong inserted between your great toe and its neighbour.

As the heelless slippers are designed on a strictly Japanese scale I very soon abandoned the attempt to wear them, and resigned myself to living in my stocking soles. This is, in truth, no great hardship, for the Japanese mat is a soft and springy pad about an inch and a-half thick, on which one can walk bare-foot without discomfort. Each mat is

made to a regulation size of six feet by three, and the area of a room is measured by the number of mats it requires. Here you are, then, on the mats of the ground floor. If you peer around you will probably desecry, in more or less dim perspective, the kitchen, the living rooms of the family, and, very likely, a small courtyard with a few dwarf trees, a little rockery, and some sort of running water—either a small fountain or a mere spout trickling into a trough.

The Simple Life.

But the "bando," or manager, is meanwhile making his obeisances, and inviting you to come upstairs and inspect your apartments. The stairs are apt to be more of a ladder than a staircase, in our sense of the word, their bare boards polished by the contact of innumerable bare and stocking feet. Aloft, you find yourself in a narrow gallery running round the courtyard, with perhaps three rooms opening off it on each side. At present all the paper-walls (shoji) and partition-panels (karakani) being withdrawn, each side of the courtyard seems like one long apartment; but when each member of the party has chosen his or her room some barbarian instinct of privacy leads you to close the partition-panels and pretend for a moment that your room is really your own.

The first thing you realise is that you have nothing to settle down upon except your own portmanteau or—the floor. The room is absolutely without furniture. There is no dressing table, no chair, no bed, no chest of drawers, no washing-stand, no looking-glass. Or, rather, I am wrong; in most rooms you will find in one corner a high towel-horse of black lacquer, which usually comes to pieces when you touch it. What use the Japanese make of it I do not

know; they certainly do not hang towels on it. Moreover, unless the inn is highly Europeanised, there are no pegs on which to hang any garments, or even your hat. You are fortunate if, on close scrutiny, you can detect an odd nail in the flint of the partition panels to which you can attach your razor-strop. There may not improbably be a screen somewhere in the room; and practice has made me an adept in the difficult art of balancing a small hand-mirror on the top of a Japanese screen.

The Call to Tea.

For the rest, there is almost certain to be a shallow alcove in the back wall (if wall it can be called) wherein hangs a single kakemono, sometimes quite a good one, but very often a mere specimen of Chinese calligraphy, a text from Confucius or something of that sort. In front of it there probably stands a porcelain jar, some three feet high, with a lovely branch of azalea most artistically disposed in it. This is all very pleasing; but as you have probably been tramping for hours along mountain sides simply ablaze with azaleas, you feel that a wash-stand or even a chair would be more to the immediate purpose.

To complete the inventory of the room, I must add that in the middle of the floor there is doubtless a handsome brass or bronze vase (possibly only a wooden box) filled with fine sand, in which the "mesan," entering anon, will delicately deposit certain pieces of glowing charcoal, on which she will place a beautifully modelled tea kettle. Then she will bring a lacquer tray with a tiny teapot and three or four exquisite little porcelain bowls. You say "O cha" (honourable tea) without even raising your voice, and the other members of the party, hearing as clearly as if the partitions were non-existent, slide back their panels and gather to tea. The kneeling "mesan" pours the clear green fluid into the little bowls, and very likely hands round along with it a lacquer box containing either sponge cake or some sort of sweetmeat. You squat either on the mats or on square cushions not more than a couple of inches thick, and console yourself with the reflection that even Japanese tea is better than no tea at all.

But though there is, from one point of view, no sort of comfort or convenience in this room, it is apt to be extremely beautiful. The partition panels, generally faced with some sort of paste-board, are decorated with drawings, either in colour or in black and white, which are often conventional and commonplace enough. But the woodwork is always charming. Even the "shoji" (the paper-walls) are so neatly finished that their clean-cut rectangular pattern gives pleasure to the eye. It almost always happens, too, that somewhere about the room there will be some subsidiary opening—perhaps a ventilator in the fixed partition over the sliding panels—filled with delicate lattice-work, so minute and accurate in its finish as to make of mere carpentry a fascinating line of art. Or, possibly, the quarter-inch board of this partition will be pierced with some pictorial design—a few bold lines suggest Fuji with a tree in the foreground, or it may be a flight of half-a-dozen birds, plovers, or young quails. The ceiling is often composed of squares of wood, of very beautiful grain. There is seldom any carving, properly so called; and there is never a single spot of paint on any of the woodwork.

MR SHAKES' EXPERIENCE.

For every thirty years Mr James Shakes has been a resident of Wellington. His shop in Manners Street is well known, and his experience will be interesting to many sufferers from Rheumatism, Gout, Sciatica, Lumbago, Rheumatic Gout, Stone, Gravel, and kindred diseases. He writes:

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