

Another fruitful cause of degeneracy is child labor, which follows the introduction of machinery, because steam supplants men's muscles and the intelligence of a child is sufficient to perform the simple mechanical operations involved in tending many machines.

Child Labor

Many children endure hardship in their own homes, where they are beyond the protection of child-labor laws, because they receive no wages and, therefore, technically are not employed. Many thousands of licenses are issued to manufacture goods in the tenements where mere babies are compelled to work. In

Home  
Factories

Play a  
Necessity

Duke of  
Wellington  
Quoted

New York City alone there are more than 23,000 such "home factories."

Perhaps the lack of healthful play works as much harm as child labor. Play was once regarded by the more austere as a waste of time, or it was at best tolerated as innocent. Now it is recognized as a necessity. The impulse to play is as natural and normal as the inclination to sleep or the desire to eat; and, when we learn its meaning, we see that it is not simply a permissible thing, but a divinely ordered thing. In God's kindergarten as in man's, play is the medium of education. Without it the child cannot be normally developed. With every power of body and mind, use is the inexorable condition of growth. Nothing is more characteristic of a healthy child than unceasing activity; and to insure this sustained activity nature gives him the impulse to play. A healthy boy will work at play twice as hard as he will work at work or at study, because he is twice as much interested in play as in work or study; and it is perfectly natural and right that he should be.

We are all familiar with the saying of the Duke of Wellington, when in his old age he saw the boys of Eton playing football:

"There's where the battle of Waterloo was won."

Dean Briggs, of Harvard University, in a paper read before the National Superintendents' Association, said that, "While the football player gets a little culture from his studies, he gets his education from his football." Many would not go as far as Dean Briggs, but all who have given any attention to the subject must recognize the fact that play of the right sort and amount not only toughens the muscles, hardens the bones, educates the senses, enlarges the lungs, and strengthens the heart, but also quickens mental processes, sharpens the wits, and tends to develop the moral nature.

Play, then, is a large and important part of a child's preparation for the work of later life, and is an essential part of a normal childhood. A child, therefore, who is robbed of a playground is robbed of a large part of his childhood, which Dickens justly pronounced a crime. Mr. Joseph Lee, who has made a study of the subject, remarks that "the boy without a playground is father to the man without a job."

A little five-year-old invalid of the tenement said: "I don't want to get dead and be an an-

Dean of  
Harvard  
Quoted

A Playground  
the Child's  
Right

Play  
Instinctive

gel,—I want to play first." If God gives the instinct, man ought to provide the playground. It is stated that in every neighborhood where a playground has been opened juvenile misdemeanors have decreased.

Corruption of  
Character

The conditions under which many thousands of city children are born and bred are about as sure to corrupt the character as to enfeeble the body. When impressionable childhood is subjected to the influence of the profanity, obscenity, and bloody brawls of drunken men and dissolute women, would it not be a moral miracle if the character were not corrupted?

Familiarity  
With Vice

It is almost inevitable that children of the tenements, while yet of tender years, should become familiar with every form of vice. They would have to be born blind and deaf in order to escape moral contamination. Many children are sent habitually from the home or the factory for beer. A little girl was seen to go twenty-six times to a saloon for her own family and for friends in a single Sunday afternoon. A resident of the University Settlement of New York spent some months in making a study of the street occupations of boys. "He found near Newspaper Row more than 100 boys sleeping in the street.

Other hundreds he found sleeping in stables, condemned buildings, halls of tenements, and back rooms of low saloons. In Chinatown alone he found twenty young boys whose business it was to run messages for the denizens of opium dives, and every one of them had the opium habit. He found messenger boys cooking opium pills in Chinese dives. Of the messenger boys he found a large number doing all-night-work between all-night houses and all-night people. . . . Corruption of morals," he says, "spreads among the street boys like a new slang phrase."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Spargo tells us that "no writer dares write a truthful description of the moral atmosphere of hundreds of places where children are employed. No publisher would dare to print the language current in an average factory."<sup>2</sup>

In view of the conditions under which many thousands are forced to live, the wonder is not that so many go astray, but that any escape.

The Real  
Wonder of It