

WASHINGTON GIRLS WALK IMPROPERLY

French Heels to Be Target of Clubwomen Bent on Obtain- ing Correct Posture.

SLOUCHY HABITS UNDER BAN

Women Physicians Enlist in Cam- paign—Central High School Cited as Example.

Only 10 out of 150 girl graduates at the Central High School commencement walked across the stage properly. This is the verdict of Mrs. Giles Scott Rafter, president of the Congress of Mothers and Parent Teachers' Association, who is taking a leading part in the campaign to teach Washington boys and girls the advantages of correct posture.

Women doctors, clubwomen and school officials, alarmed at the general weakening of health due to too great a strain on any set of muscles in walking or sitting, are determined to enlist the aid of playgrounds instructors and teachers in fighting curvature of the spine and other ills. The French heel is one of the first targets of the posture reformers.

Dr. Joseph A. Murphy, medical supervisor of the public schools, has declared that a majority of Washington school children sit in incorrect postures. He has promised to see that special stress on remedies for this situation is given when the schools reopen next fall.

Favors Outdoor Exercises.

Dr. Francis Foye, chairman of the educational and school committee of the District of Columbia Medical Society, claimed last night that a vigorous campaign should be inaugurated for more out-of-doors play and exercise for school children. "This out-of-door treatment should have expert direction," said Dr. Foye, "but even if it can not be directed it is better to get it anyway. Curvature of the spine is the outcome of the weakening of the general health and too great a strain on any set of muscles. The best exercise is hanging by the hands from a rod or ring. Out-of-door exercise makes a child breathe correctly.

"The way to prevent incorrect posture is more out-of-doors physical exercise, nourishing food, proper baths and clean clothes. A child then feels strong and healthy and self-respecting, and these things have an altogether good effect on his health.

"One word as to speech and its effect on the general health. Children should be taught to articulate properly and enunciate in a correct manner. This is good health exercise as it encourages deep breathing. I should also like to see athletics in the schools available for all the children instead of the few who excel in them. Those who excel get too much of this work, and those who do not excel do not get enough, often none at all."

Cadets Show Correct Posture.

Mrs. Rafter, after pointing out that few school girls know how to walk properly, said that at recent high school graduation exercises the boys made a much better appearance, due no doubt to the military training. Mrs. Rafter advocated the placing of scales in every school building and having the children's weight taken monthly and any gain or loss in weight reported to the mothers.

Another feature Mrs. Rafter approves of inaugurating is school luncheons for children who live at a distance from the schoolhouse. Hungry children, in her opinion, slump in their seats and assume incorrect posture with the resultant curvature of the spine.

Wants Clinics in Schools.

Dr. Clara Little, an osteopath, who specializes in children's cases, believes in the establishment of a clinic in every school building. She cited incidents where children brought to her for treatment at the age of 2 or 3 years have had affections of the legs or arms for some time and the parents remained in ignorance of the fact.

Another woman physician, Dr. Evelyn Mitchell, who is a neurologist, blamed high heels and slouchy habits of standing for much of the incorrect posture evil. "Little girls in high heels are too common a sight on our city streets," said Dr. Mitchell. "The high heels bring about backache, make the children sway back and give them an improper balance altogether. Another bad habit is standing on one foot, which throws the muscle out of play. We should impress upon our young people the necessity of standing straight and breathing properly. Often I find nervous troubles are caused by the discomforts of improper posture, which affects the nerves and the digestive organs.

"We have made some progress in the posture at school desks from the old-fashioned way of sitting at the far right end of the desk to write, which put an undue strain on the muscles of that side. Now we teach children to sit squarely in front of the desk, which is proper, but too often they still hump their backs when they write."