

An Advocate.

# Supervised Playgrounds

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One of the  
Greatest Needs in  
Toronto To-day

*J. J. Kelso,  
Toronto.*



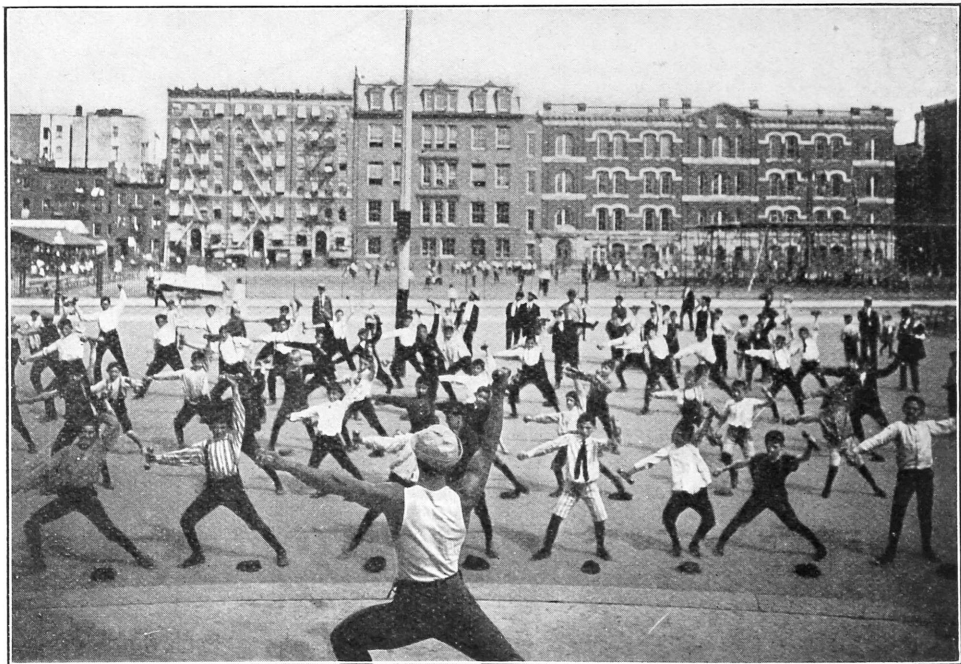
Large grounds given over to children.

## Play and Exercise for Children.

It is necessary at the present time to focus public opinion on the great need that exists in Toronto for suitably equipped and supervised playgrounds. The City Council has done well in the matter of Parks and Public Squares, but grass plots and flower gardens do not meet the need of Young Toronto, and this pamphlet is issued as an earnest appeal on behalf of present and future generations of children whose rights and interests have not heretofore been fully recognized.

Play is essential to proper physical development, and moral growth depends to a large extent on free and healthy exercise. It is the right of childhood and it is only reasonable to ask that all the necessary facilities should be provided. To be beneficial it should be wisely encouraged and directed and the undesirable elements eliminated. There should be swings, see-saws, slides, sand piles, wading pools, race tracks, base ball diamonds and other paraphernalia. These playgrounds should be numerous enough to be within easy reach of every city child, and athletics should be given a high place in public estimation. In this way stamina may be acquired that will carry many a youth safely through the stress and strife of manhood.

Mayor Coatsworth, Controller Shaw, School Inspector Hughes, Mr. J. S. Willison and the majority of the aldermen and officials of the city favor these



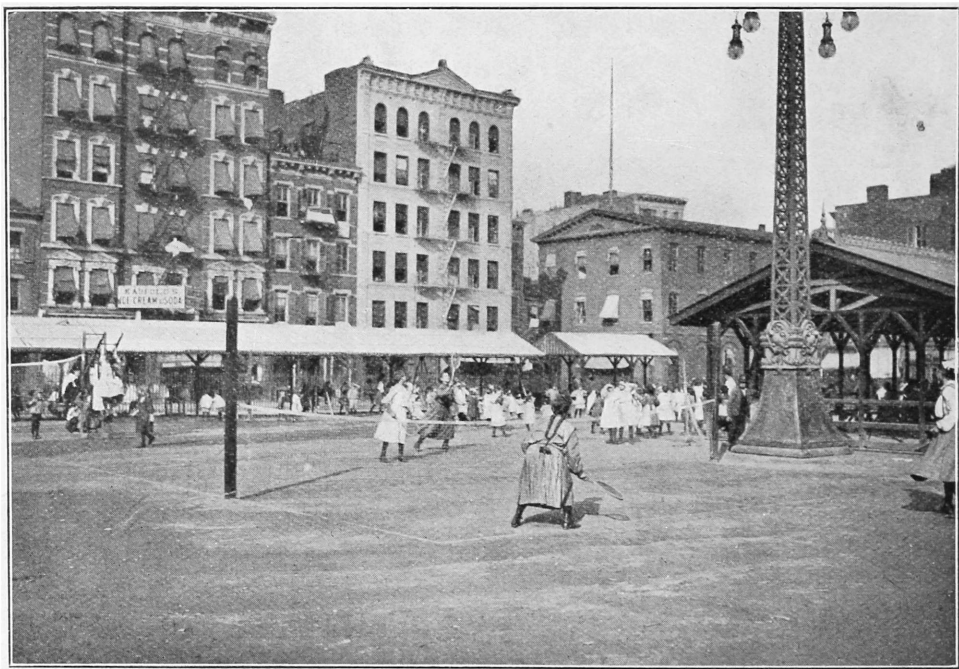
Working off surplus energy.

play-grounds. The newspapers all endorse them as essential to the city's best welfare, and those who work among the children of the poor are earnestly looking forward to their early establishment. To give some idea of what is needed the accompanying illustrations of New York playgrounds are shown. Why not at once convert some of our public squares into playgrounds, and acquire without further delay such other property as may be necessary? Public opinion would undoubtedly support the city council in a forward movement of this kind.

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## Supervised Playgrounds.

Play is for young children an absolute necessity. It is quite impossible for them to grow up physically strong and active unless they have abundant opportunities to exercise their bodies and limbs. It is just as impossible for them to grow up morally robust and capable of habitual self-control if they are not allowed constant opportunities to play with other children. Only in this way can they learn that other people have rights as well as themselves, and that if they are to remain members of society they must be prepared to do to others as they would have others do to them. All the pulpit talks and Sunday school teaching they may be subjected to will not do for them in the way of moral training what they



Girls require exercise as well as boys.

can do for themselves in social play. The ordinary games suitable to young children afford also the best kind of intellectual training, which includes alertness, resourcefulness, presence of mind, power of concentration, and other acquisitions which no school class work can so effectively supply.

This truth has been for several years recognized by the education authorities of some of the large cities in the United States and by a few smaller cities in Canada. Playgrounds have been set apart for the use of children only, have been suitably equipped for the purpose, and have been placed under the oversight of properly qualified caretakers. Only in this way can children living in tenements and slums get any chance to play, because it is quite impracticable to let them have the use of the streets for that purpose. Their persistent inclination to make a play-ground of the highways is the cause of many a fatal accident to children who are too young to think of the danger they are incurring or to comprehend it. The instinctive desire for play overmasters them to such an extent that while engaged in it they have no thought for anything else. It is unspeakably tragic to know that the natural passion which might easily be made a means of physical mental and moral salvation is allowed to become a deadly peril to child-life in all large cities.

With the exception of a few fairly good playgrounds attached to public schools, hardly any provision have yet been made to meet the needs of young



Athletic training in the heart of a great city.



children in Toronto. School playgrounds are for school pupils only, and for them during only that part of each day which is spent at the school. But there are many children living in congested parts of the city where they cannot attend the public schools. They are of kindergarten age or less, and their parents or guardians could not afford to send them to a kindergarten even if there were one available. Moreover, what they need at their age is not conventional and make believe games in a dusty schoolroom, but real play in the open air, and with plenty of space in which to run and tumble without risk of serious injury to themselves or others.

The locality most in need of public playgrounds is the area between Queen and College streets, and between Yonge street and University avenue. The density of the population there has been greatly increased by the accession of many foreigners who live in the crowded domiciles and build small dwellings in backyards. Anyone who desires to get some idea of the number of children within the area above defined can gratify his curiosity by a walk down one of the longitudinal streets on a Sunday afternoon. A considerable part of that space will some time be taken up by the new General Hospital, but within what is left of it there should be several small playgrounds rather than one large one. That is a matter for the consideration of both the City Council and the Board of Education, the former



Usefully and happily employed.

having under the park purchase system the right to acquire the land, while the latter should look after the maintenance and supervision of the playgrounds.

*Globe*, Nov. 14 '06.

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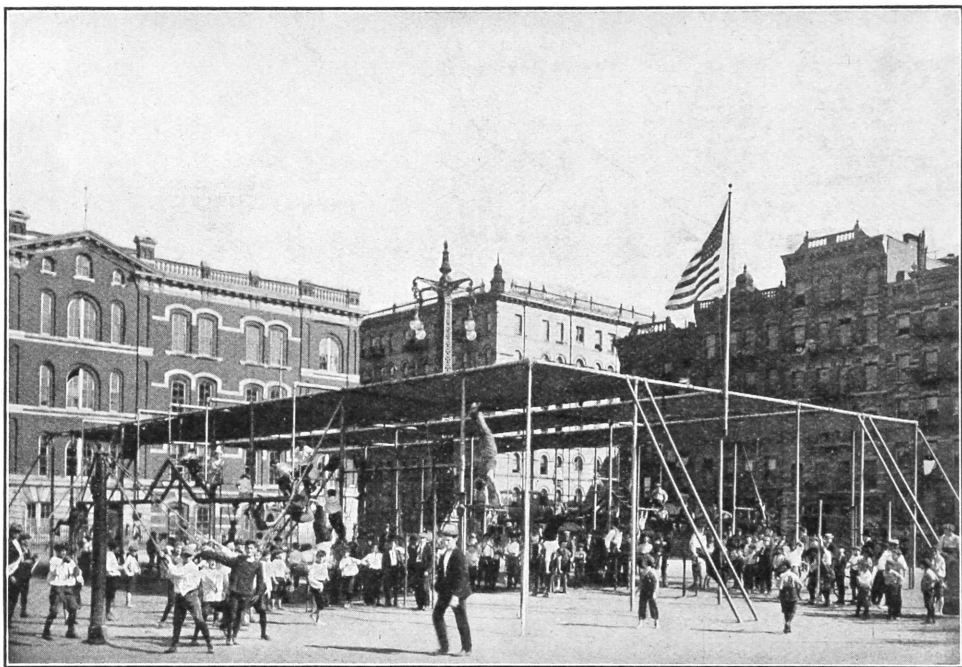
## Note.

The photographs from which these illustrations were made were kindly loaned by the American Institute of Social Service.

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## These Playgrounds Needed Everywhere.

While Toronto is specially mentioned, as being the largest city in Ontario, there is no reason why these playgrounds should not be established in all our cities and towns. Friends in Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Peterborough, St. Thomas, etc., might take the matter up.—*J. J. Kelso, Toronto.*



How would this look in Toronto?