

Better facilities for detecting defects, more rigid definitions of fitness for military service, less urgency in supplying men fit to fight, have undoubtedly combined to increase rejections for certain defects, and for others to indicate only slight improvements when we might reasonably have expected far greater ones on the basis of the observed national morbidity and mortality rates. It has been pointed out that national vital statistics give a much truer picture of the Nation's health than do the preliminary statistics of physical defects brought to light in the selective service examinations. The death rate is lower now than it has ever been, and longevity is at its peak. There is no question but that there has been marked improvement in the health of the civilian population with a vastly greater chance now for young people to win through to adult life than 25 years ago.

Let us not forget, however, that it was *physical defects* at a period when health should be at its best, and not the death rate, which aroused the crusaders of 1918. It was to equip for life, that led us then to start working for healthier boys and girls. It does not help us much to know that the young men of today must pass more rigid tests and meet higher standards than did their fathers; that on the whole they are taller and better educated, and stand a good chance of living longer. This is the year 1941, not 1918. We are judging and being judged by the standards we have helped to establish. And by those standards preventable and remediable defects and diseases are still all too common among American youth.

On the other hand, if we have failed to achieve dramatic and universal improvement in the young men of one generation as compared with those of the preceding generation, there is no reason to be discouraged. In Emerson's words, "Our knowledge is the amassed thought and experience of innumerable minds." As the generations succeed one another, new methods are tried out, new facilities are made available, new information is spread, old prejudices and superstitions are overcome. With each generation we begin afresh, with well-tried knowledge constantly growing, with workable machinery constantly being improved, with a few spectacular triumphs to hearten us. What we have already accomplished, what we have yet to do, is the theme of this year's HEALTH BULLETIN FOR TEACHERS.

*For oute of olde feldys, as men sey,
Comyth al this newe corn from yere to yere.*

CHAUCER, *The Parlement of Fowles*

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