

### FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN.

We regret that owing to a printers' error it was stated in our editorial of last week that 50 per cent. of children of school age throughout the country were feeble minded. It should have read, according to Sir George Newman's report, "that it would appear that medical inspection indicates about 0.50 per cent." are so afflicted. That is to say, not more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1 per cent. belong to this category. This percentage is quite sufficiently serious to demand the most careful consideration of general causes of this national evil.

## PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

### STUDIES IN INVALID OCCUPATIONS.

#### A MANUAL FOR NURSES AND ATTENDANTS.

A book little known in this country, but one which deserves the attention of all nurses, is "Studies in Invalid Occupations," by Miss Susan E. Tracy, published by Whitcomb & Barrows, Boston, U.S.A., who states in her Foreword that these studies were brought into systematised form, and first tested by practical application in the classes of the Training School for Nurses of the Adams Nervine Asylum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, with the interest and unfailing sympathy of its Superintendent, Dr. Daniel H. Fuller, who contributes the introduction to the book. The closing chapter, relating to the work for the insane, is, we are told, supplied in great kindness by Dr. E. Stanley Abbot, of McLean Hospital, Waverley, Massachusetts.

The value of the book is increased by the perfectly bewitching illustrations. The frontispiece is "A Group of Colonial Clothes-pins," including John Alden and Priscilla, and George and Martha Washington, while up through the centre rides Paul Revere with the friendly Indians in the rear. All these are made from clothes-pins (the ordinary wooden sort, with which clothes are fastened to a line to dry), dressed in paper. The cloth animals are also excellent, and one of the prettiest pictures is that depicting a group of eggshell toys. A nurse whose fingers could create half of the things she is taught to make in this book would certainly be an invaluable acquisition in a convalescent household, more especially with children.

Dr. Fuller, in his introduction, points out that "there is a growing tendency on the part of many physicians to depart from the custom of the past generation by prescribing fewer drugs and these more rationally." It is his belief that "suitable occupation is a valuable agent in the treatment of the sick. It has its place, not as a panacea, but as an important adjunct to other forms of treatment, and sometimes it is quite all the treatment necessary. It has been used too exclusively by the specialist, and too little by the general practitioner, although there is much clever use of it by resourceful doctors and nurses which is never widely published.

"Occupation for the sick is not employed so much as it might be profitably, partly because of ignorance of the great good that may be accomplished thereby, and partly because of the difficulties which appear to stand in the way of its satisfactory use. The busy doctor and the busy nurse may feel that they have not time to initiate any régime of this kind, even if the usefulness of it is apparent. More frequently, perhaps, through lack of ingenuity, an occupation cannot be provided, much less maintained, by either the physician or the nurse.

"The psychology of work is a subject of importance and interest, but it is not necessary for the physician to be a psychologist to prescribe work wisely for the patient whose physical, nervous, mental, and moral characteristics he has made the object of keen observation and study.

"It must not be inferred from the above that occupation can be used successfully in a haphazard manner. Not only must the nervous and physical strength be carefully estimated, but the temperament, natural tastes and disposition have to be taken into account in the kind and amount of occupation suggested, as well as in the manner and place in which it is presented. Different physicians will have different theories as to the psychic processes involved. Immediate or more remote results may be aimed at, and the precise conditions to be treated may be of a subtle nature."

#### METHODS OF TEACHING.

In the chapter devoted to "Methods of Teaching," the author points out in relation to nurse pupils that they will be of many sorts. "Those of quick insight who select material with little hesitation, and take themselves off to some quiet corner to bring back some charmingly worked-out scheme. Perhaps there will be two out of ten of this class. The average pupil works along rather laboriously, but with a certain interest and satisfaction in results. After these come the trials, those whose hands seem not to be a part of them, those who work while the instructor is beside them, and then wait until she gets around again. Perhaps the saving grace in the work is its variety. The pupil who made shipwreck of a Canton flannel dog turns out an excellently bound book; the one who flounders and gasps over a piece of paper-folding will knit a shawl with good steady strokes. But because they are nurses and will be called to suit all sorts of men and minds they must learn to do the things for which they care little, if by so doing, they can supply the needed interest to the patient dependent upon them."

#### THE TEACHER.

Concerning the teacher, we read that "the desire to place occupation studies in the curriculum of the training schools makes way at once for the question, "Who shall act as teachers?" A very different set of qualifications is necessary in the teaching of the sick from those that suffice in teaching the well; therefore, those attempting

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