

Suicide.

"Among cases cited there have been (says the author) several where mental depression caused definite suicidal impulses, while of the thousands of suicides that occur in our midst the story is not unusual that the wretched individual had 'suffered lately from pains in the head and was depressed,' but the verdict of 'suicide whilst of unsound mind' closes the chapter without any systematic post-mortem investigation to determine the remedial and material cause of these tragedies, which in a very large proportion, is almost certainly some form of toxæmia, rather than the absurdly inadequate causes which, *faute de mieux*, are blamed.

"Doubtless the yielding to the suicidal impulse indicates some flaw in mentality, but the precipitating causes are the intense depression, the inability to face mental invalidism, the loss of ordered judgment, and the impossibility of viewing real or imaginary troubles in their proper proportion—such factors present to those suffering from the toxæmia of focal sepsis become overwhelming

"The fact that suicide is so often determined by conditions that have no connection with toxæmia, and may be even deemed ethically correct in certain circumstances, should not blind us to the equally undoubted fact that a great many are due to curable disease with consequent toxæmia. Furthermore, the unbalanced mind, with suicidal impulse is near akin to homicidal mania, or to other forms of mental aberration."

Crime and Sepsis.

In reference to crime and sepsis, the author goes on to say that he feels "constrained to touch on this important aspect of the mental disturbances determined by nasal or aural infection.

"There are two directions in which the infective disease may operate.

"The first is by mental confusion and loss of memory.

"In the second class, with delusions of suspicion, or of being persecuted or poisoned, the unbalanced mind is liable to lead to disastrous crime. Cacosmia and foul taste of food from sinusitis, both common complaints in such cases, may, in the mind unhinged by focal sepsis, become delusions suggesting 'gassing' or 'food poisoning,' Sir George Savage records examples of the growth of delusion in this way.

"One enters dangerous ground in touching on these aspects of 'psychosis,' but it is a question too serious to ignore. This, fortunately, is already recognised as a consequence of encephalitis lethargica.

"We have already afforded examples of both psychasthenia and certifiable insanity determined by focal pyogenic infection and cured by the eradication of the infection, and unless one is prepared to deny limitations of legal responsibility for fresh encephalitic delinquencies, we must concede similar limitations in the mental effects of focal sepsis. Where there is room to doubt the accused should be subjected to competent medical investigation, for obviously common sense revolts against attributing misconduct to any malady short of convincing proofs that serious pathological conditions have caused definite mental disease. In the young delinquent, at any rate, there is reason to believe the evil genius is often much more sepsis than Satan."

Asthma.

The effect of nasal sinusitis as a causal factor in spasmodic asthma is most interestingly described. "Many cases of asthma are arrested by eliminating focal sepsis in the nasal sinuses, and in those cases associated with nasal polypus, it is as essential to treat the sinus infection causing the polypus formation as to remove the actual polypi."

Part II deals with Diagnostic Methods and Treatment, and therefore does not concern nurses except in so far as by an intelligent apprehension of these they may be able to give better service to the medical practitioner.

We note that Dr. Watson-Williams draws attention to the practical value of general hygiene with particular attention to the correction of hypo-vitaminosis in young children. "In one child with nasal infection, treatment had failed to cure until followed up by special diet combined with such a simple remedy as orange juice for its vitamin value."

We most cordially commend this book to our readers. It will more than repay careful study, and is of absorbing interest.

M.B.

A BOOK FOR MOTHERS.

This little book by Margaret Gordon should serve its purpose very well—to give "Practical Advice on all matters relating to the Welfare of Children from Infancy to School Age."*

Miss Gordon has gained her experience by many years of work at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital, and she has brought to it a keen-eyed sympathy which has observed children from all angles and at all ages.

Not only mothers should profit by her advice. Nurses for sick children and nurses from the training institutes, such as the Norland and the Princess Christian would do well to study it.

Curiously the author does not refer to the latter, though she has high praise for the "British Nannie."

Her first chapters deal with the care of infants, laying due stress on breast-feeding and early training and particularly inveighing against the pernicious dummy. For rather older babies there are useful hints on feeding with lists of suitable and unsuitable foods and in reference to different seasons.

A practical and more unusual subject is holidays—the need of special catering for the younger ones at picnics, dry bathing suits for playing in the sun after the dip, the unwisdom of neglecting the daily nap, etc.

Discipline is treated from the psychological standpoint—"It is a wise mother who knows the family history of her own child, and then has enough sense to make good use of her knowledge." And later, "Mothers are too inclined in these days to dabble in every branch of psychological theories connected with bringing up children, at the same time leaving the straightforward training of their characters to school teachers."

Miss Gordon has had extensive correspondence with parents who have sought her advice, and the publication of this book is likely to increase it. She has specially studied the neurotic child, not neglecting the neurotic mother. Indeed there is a chapter devoted to various types of mothers, and an outline of the qualities necessary for success in that role.

She gives excellent clinical pictures of the onset of various infectious diseases, and some account of the ordinary illnesses, rheumatism specially. Hints on first-aid follow, with an attack on the use of iodine with which many nurses will not agree. If not used too strong, it is surely very efficacious in treating cuts and abrasions.

The final chapters are on clothes for older children and fancy dress. Perhaps advice as to the best patterns for baby clothes, or simple recipes, for instance, would have been more useful, but mothers will be grateful for such a variety of sound, commonsense suggestions collected into one handy little book. We wish it great success. K.M.L.

* Geoffrey Bles, 22, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, S.W.1. Price 3s. 6d. net.

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