

BACKWARD CHILDREN.*

This is a useful little pamphlet issued by the Association of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres with a view to bringing to mothers clear and concise information on many points whereby they may help backward children. It contains information that should prove particularly useful to nurses who are giving health lectures and to teachers. Wisely, the pamphlet stresses from the beginning the importance of dealing early with the varied aspects of development in a backward child. Very much precious time is lost and bad habits are established because people do not realise that the younger the child the more elastic is its organism as regards the establishment of habits. It follows that the mother who tries to train such a child will have less trouble with him if she realises the importance of early training and regards his development as a kind of delicate growth that should be fostered and guided.

Hints are given in connection with exercise, standing, sitting and walking, and a whole series of exercises are indicated in order to help the mother to teach a backward and lethargic child to use its limbs. We are glad to see that due warning is given that the child be not overtired and strained in the process. Hints about feeding cover many important points and we just hope that those who put them into practical use will have the necessary patience and perseverance required to achieve success, and thus more thoroughly to equip the backward child for the battle of life which lies before him. The book goes on to the process to be adopted in teaching such children speech, a very important matter indeed. With regard to toys and games, we are glad to see it stated that anything almost can be a toy to a child. We would go further and say that such toys as, for instance, a beautiful doll with flaxen hair and blue eyes is absolutely harmful to a backward child, and indeed to any child; it leaves nothing for the child to think out. A rag doll made by the child or with the child as a collaborator in its manufacture will really prove a factor in developing the child's mentality. But toys should be capable of movement, so get a string attached to the glass beads you have inserted for the doll's eyes in order that the child, by pulling the string, can move the eyes. These are remarks by the way, and, to return to our observations on the publication, we are glad to see attention drawn to the necessity for remedying defects in movement. Many cases of malposture have arisen through lack of knowledge in dealing with preventive work in this connection.

The chapter on lessons does not please us so much. Here the tendency, it seems to us, is to push the intellect too soon by such things as the Montessori solid insets, geometrical insets, matching shapes and pictures and so on, to the sacrifice of the child's imagination and the beginnings of artistic and creative tendencies. In the paragraph giving instructions for drawing, the writer recommends the use of coloured chalks, and these are excellent for children; here lies an important point in connection with temperament. Unfortunately, the writer goes on to give directions as to drawing lines and then letting the child draw his lines beside the teacher's, and so on, thus falling into a more or less mechanised method of using drawing as a means of development. The writer says that this is useful for children who do not understand that they should keep within particular limits, but it will do a child harm rather than otherwise to force overmuch limitations of any kind upon him; also from a more physiological aspect, it involves a good deal of strain on the eyes, nerves, and especially the smaller muscles of a child, to persist for more than a minute or so in the effort to acquire the power to draw a straight line. We are glad that as regards moral care, the

writer stresses the point that in order to prevent children from developing bad habits, they should see that there is no cause for such. Loose hair dangling over the forehead will develop the habit of brushing the hand over the forehead, blinking or grimacing. An uncomfortable nose will compel the child to interfere with it, and flesh picking may start because the skin around the finger nails becomes hard and dry. A child who gets plenty of exercise and fresh air during the day is less likely to form bad habits than one who is kept more indoors. Valuable advice given in connection with a backward child is that the mother should learn the habit of never doing anything for the child that he should do for himself. If she becomes too indulgent in this respect, she may definitely push him more backwards.

On the whole, the pamphlet is sound and practical, but in all present-day treatises on the education of children we would like to see greater encouragement given for the play of imagination and evidence of a greater realisation of the importance of a free development of the imagination and a realisation, too, of the happiness which it gives to a child to express itself in its own way. It is to be remembered that education in its actual origin means drawing out and developing what is *in* the child, and not a continuous effort to push in what is not.

CANCER HANDBOOKS AVAILABLE FOR NURSES.

We learn from the June Bulletin issued by the American Nurses' Association that the American Society for the Control of Cancer is again presenting to nurses throughout the country helpful literature on the subject of cancer treatment and control. This time it is in the form of an authoritative handbook, *Cancer and its Care*. The contents are concerned with important facts regarding the prevalence of cancer, its nature, cause, treatment, curability, research, public health aspects and control agencies; special questions on the contagiousness of the disease, racial susceptibility and diet; special procedures for hemorrhage infection, etc. There is also a bibliography.

The Cancer Society offers this handbook free to every nurse who writes for it. They have already supplied it to individuals, hospitals and schools of nursing who have requested it. Every nurse who realises the importance of her services in the cause of cancer control should have this splendid little booklet. Write to the American Society for the Control of Cancer at 25, West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. Your mail man will bring you your copy of *Cancer and its Care* in a very few days.

WHAT TO READ.

"The Letters of Queen Victoria," covering the last five years, 1896-1901, of the reign, edited by Mr. George Earl Buekle. Vols. I., II., III. Series Three.

"Bath," Edith Sitwell.

"A Private Universe," André Maurois.

"South African Memories," Sir Percy FitzPatrick.

"The Soldier and the Gentlewoman," Hilda Vaughan.

"Public Affairs," Barbara Worsley-Gough.

"Lewis Carroll," Walter de la Mare.

"An Incorruptible Irishman," E. Somerville and Martin Ross.

WORDS FOR THE MONTH.

"I believe the time will come when some part of the great flood of wealth that is coming to education and to social service will flow into the channel of nursing education. Some perhaps can give it themselves, some can reach those who can give, but let us put this subject of securing endowment for nursing education first and foremost in our social programme. I believe there is no other single thing in the whole field of education that so much needs to be done."—*Dr. C. E. A. Winslow, "Modern Hospital."*

* By Mabel A. Jarman. Published by the Association of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres.

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