

the teaching profession, the medical profession, hospitals, magistrates of children's courts, public relief authorities and public and private welfare organisations, labour exchanges, employers, the law courts and the police, and penal institutions. Mental hygiene dispensaries must be well equipped, have a pleasant atmosphere, and be supplied with adequate funds. Mental health work cannot be carried out cheaply; it is the most delicate task imaginable.

Moreover, the public should be informed of the facilities available. People should be taught that abnormalities of behaviour and of the intellect are not due to caprice or deliberate ill will, but are the result of illness; and that such illness must be treated by a specialist.

The prejudice which leads people to hide mental disorders—thus preventing them from being treated in time—must be overcome. Persons threatened with mental troubles, must be protected against over-fatigue, unsuitable modes of life, and hostility and misunderstanding on the part of their associates. Defective intellect and abnormal behaviour must be detected in the schoolroom, the factory, and the Army. Drunkards, drug-addicts, vagrants, delinquents, and all those who are abnormal in any way must be watched with particular care. Professional guidance also is closely related to mental hygiene, the fundamental rules of which should be taught not only to schoolchildren and students, but also to the entire population, at the same time as the rules of physical hygiene. Parents especially should be thoroughly acquainted with these rules. They should know that it is necessary to study each child individually; to observe carefully the development of his faculties and inclinations; to have great patience and understanding; not to set up arbitrary rules; to let the consequences of wrongdoing bring their own punishment; constantly to give the example of self-possession, sincerity, straight-forwardness and honesty; to lead a quiet and regular existence, though at the same time making the necessary allowance for variety; not to check the child's imagination, his desire for action and wish to build up his own world. The harmfulness of anger, cruelty, selfishness, unruliness, and laziness must be instantly shown up. In normal times a child should be given an animal to rear, or a small garden or a few pots of flowers to care for; his parents should encourage him to make a hobby of collecting different things, to take care of his toys, books, clothes and room; they should see that he has suitable friends and companions. Strict attention should be paid to cleanliness, exercise, food, sleep and physical health. Such are the cardinal principles of mental hygiene; everyone knows them, but how many put them into practice?

SIGHT SAVING CLASSES IN SCHOOLS.

The first sight-saving class in Canada was established in 1917, after the great explosion in Halifax Harbour, which impaired the vision of many children as well as adults. At present there are 16 classes in Canada. The purpose is threefold: to instruct visually handicapped children with a minimum of eyestrain; to teach them how to conserve the vision they possess; and to provide such vocational guidance and training that they may fill useful places in the community.

VERRUCA, THEIR CAUSE AND TREATMENT.

By MISS L. GODDARD, S.R.N.

Verruca, or wart, is formed by the hypertrophy of papillæ, and is seen in some cases as a collection of lengthened and elevated overgrowths of the skin, to which they closely adhere, and are ensheathed by a thickening of hard dry cuticle, which appears horny in texture and like a bundle of fibres. The latter, if severed from the skin, can be seen in the common wart with brownish marks in it, which is due to dirt finding its way between the fibres.

This horny texture is usually round and cracked on the surface, and is seen often on the hands of children and adults, and on the hands and feet at all ages.

Warts appear to multiply and reach certain sizes and lengths, sometimes breaking out in crops, appearing quite suddenly and just as suddenly disappearing. They are mostly harmless.

The cause is unknown, but there are various theories as to their appearance, one being that it is due to a germ so far undiscovered; another, that the blood from one wart causes others to appear, or they may occur anywhere where the surface of the skin is exposed to irritation.

Apart from the common wart so often seen, which is harmless, there is the smooth wart, which is known as *Verruca glabra*; also the soft wart, which is just a small overgrowth of skin and is seen usually upon the eyelid and the ears and neck.

Senile warts are found on old people; they are often irritating, greasy in appearance and hard to the touch.

Another form of wart, called *Verruca digitata*, occurs sometimes on the scalp of females. It is elongated in shape and causes a certain amount of annoyance when combing the hair.

Post-mortem warts are seen in persons who work in post-mortem research and dissection work.

Another species of wart which is quite painful occurs under the nails of either the fingers or the toes, and is known as a subungual wart. It continues to grow down the sides of the nail as it increases in number.

Horns are sometimes seen on the hand and face. They are warty in nature, but reach quite a length, in some cases inches, and are due to a wart covering a sebaceous gland, thus drying up exudation and causing the horn to become longer and longer unless treatment is given.

Another kind of wart, less harmless, is the malignant form, sometimes seen in chimney sweeps, being probably due to the irritation set up by the soot. The wart eventually spreads to the lymphatic glands and continues growing.

Tuberculous warts are sometimes seen in persons who come into contact with people suffering with tuberculosis, occurring usually on the hands following an abrasion.

Verruca acuminata or moist warts are due to the hypertrophy of the papillæ in various parts of the mucous membranes and caused by the irritation of the secretion, usually affecting the genitals, but disappear when the discharge is cleared up; they may be seen in other parts of the body, such as the armpits. They are usually pointed or cauliflower-shaped and are of venereal origin, and are, of course, contagious, but the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)