

## BOOK REVIEWS

By Charles S. Bernheimer

## MISS WALD'S BOOK

"The House on Henry Street" is an attractive volume by the head of the house, Lillian D. Wald (New York: Henry Holt & Company, \$2.00 net). The volume is illustrated from etchings and drawings by a Jewish young man of the East Side, Abraham Phillips. These illustrations help to give vividness to Miss Wald's striking narrative of over twenty years initiative of and association with social work on the East Side.

Miss Wald's leadership in the settlement world is indicated throughout this work of hers. It shows her responsibility for the employment of trained nurses in the public schools of New York City, which was the forerunner of the municipality's Bureau of Child Hygiene; her organization of the visiting nurses' work of New York City, for which her settlement is renowned; her active stimulation of the idea which eventuated in the Children's Bureau of the National Government, of which Miss Julia Lathrop is the head; her active hand in the establishment of Clinton Hall; her responsibility for the Neighborhood Playground on Grand Street, opened in February, 1915, which, as stated by her, "was the outcome of the work of the festival and dramatic groups of the Henry Street Settlement." Miss Wald has recorded these activities as of impersonal stimulation, but those who know her sympathetic and statesmanlike qualities recognize her dominant personality in the organization and maintenance of these several social services of which the East Side is the liberal recipient.

No one who reads "The House on Henry Street" and notes the many-sided activities which it suggests as the result of more than two decades of earnest, intelligent and neighborly contact with the life of the East Side can question the value of Miss Wald's splendid contribution to social service in the United States and to her exemplification of the social settlement as a type of such service, grounded in high ideals and worked out on a practical basis with clear understanding of the needs of the people.

## "LEADERS OF GIRLS"

Clara Ewing Espey, who is described in a foreword "as one who knows all girls and knows them through and through" by Jessie Field, secretary of the town and country work of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association, has compiled a volume under the heading of "Leaders of Girls" (New York: Abingdon Press, 75 cents net). This little book will be sought after by leaders of girls' clubs. It discusses the difficulties of girls, their need of moral sustenance and the manner in which the leader may reach out to various types of girls. Club leaders have had very little matter prepared for them as aids in their club work. This book will, therefore, be a welcome addition to the small library of club aids. It shows thoroughly the problems which the club leader must encounter and is well fortified with suggestions and programs.

## PLAY AND RECREATION

The Department of Recreation of the Russell Sage Foundation, New York City, has published a pamphlet (price 10 cents) entitled "Sources of Information on Play and Recreation," by Lee F. Hanmer and Howard F. Knight, which contains a list of books and periodicals on games, athletics, dancing, dramatics and the like that the teacher and leader will find most helpful as ready references.

## PRESENT-DAY SOCIAL CONDITIONS

"Drift and Mastery" is a brilliant, clear-cut analysis of present-day conditions written in Walter Lippmann's forcible style (New York: Mitchell Kennerly). It is a series of essays well calculated to stir the reader to thought on economic and social problems, particularly as they affect this country.

## SOCIAL PRESCRIPTIONS

Edith Motter Lamb has selected extracts from Dr. Richard C. Cabot's "What Men Live By." They are published under the title "Prescriptions," by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston (50 cents). These are excellent sayings, but the reviewer regards Dr. Cabot's own book, worked out in his own way, as much more worth while.



## MODERN HOMES FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Armand Wyle  
Rochester

The past decade marks a most important era in the history of child-caring institutions. At the beginning of this period theories regarding the orphanage as primarily an educational institution were brought to the attention of the public by such men as Dr. Reeder and Dr. Bernstein. After an absence of three years from this work I made a somewhat hasty visit to eleven institutions in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Albany and Rochester, finding advance in this direction of social work far beyond my expectations, and problems heretofore considered hopeless had been solved to the satisfaction of the managers at least. I wish to call attention here to an important preliminary survey of child-caring institutions made by Commissioner Doherty, Dr. Bernstein, Dr. Reeder and Brother Barnabas, published by the New York City Department of Charities, which must result in the hurrying of backward boards of managers to keep pace with modern developments. Among other matters it suggests that complacent communities should no longer be permitted to merely feed, clothe and lodge destitute children; that families must not be ruthlessly torn apart as an easy solution; that it is unfair to thrust unprepared children into a frigid world.

When standards of institutional care and after-care are developed to the point of efficiency indicated by some of the systems into which I have examined there will be little evidence of what was at one time so noticeable in the "institution child." A composite view of these institutions would indicate a higher standard of preparation to meet the competition of life than is found in the average well-to-do normal home; there is always lacking, of course, the natural sympathy that a real mother has for her own children and which must always be artificial in the father and mother paid to act *in loco parentis* for a large number

of children. There is, however, some indication found in certain institutions of the more natural relationship of Big Brother on the part of executives; we also find the extremes of overefficiency and of unguided mental and moral growth. If the prepared standard which is planned to follow the "Plan of Inspection—Questions, Suggestions and Standards" referred to above as a "survey" will result in a modification of these extremes in the institution of the future, we will approximate the best homes of our "first families." I personally believe this happy medium can best be worked out in the small institution, preferably, of course, of the cottage type, but not impossible in the congregate system, as has been shown in at least one orphanage visited. In this institution freedom of action is taken as a matter of course by the children and management. There is no institution "line-up" to meet the various requirements of routine, and character is developed by an enlightened superintendent abetted by a board awakened to a realization of its full duty to superintendent, children and society.

An extreme of luxurious appointment was found in one cottage, built as a memorial by a benefactor who insisted upon an unusually large sum being expended, and the question arises as to whether the characters of most of the children inhabiting it will be ennobled sufficiently to permit these children to adjust themselves to less pleasant surroundings when the time comes to leave their present home. The aesthetic taste developed will, of course, help to raise the standard of their new homes, but the transition will not necessarily be conducive to happiness.

While the small orphanage appears to be the happiest in its home life, there were communities visited where two orphanages existed with only sufficient funds to maintain one adequately. Where there is an

abundance of money for the purpose it would doubtless be ideal to pay for two overhead charges. This unfortunately is not the happy situation and much is lost in this manner, so well known to federationists. The open difference is usually attributed to the question of *Kashruth*, but is really due to the mutual distrust of the Orthodox and Reform factions frequently existing in cities. The real differences could easily be adjusted by the display of tolerance on either side. The difficulties and additional expense of maintaining *Kashruth* consistently must be met, as must the higher educational standards demanded. One side can satisfy the criticism of the other by pledging endorsed support for a term of years and a few of the traditional dietary and symbolic observances consistent with the present age could be yielded in return. Representation on the board can be adjusted by awarding places to those who have prepared themselves for the work to be directed. The stock exchange plan of purchasing seats is happily passing and the time is fast approaching when it will be found as profitable to have the majority of the membership of boards of directors of institutions equipped with a knowledge of modern philanthropic tendencies as it is to have an experienced executive. The number of trustees attending state and national conferences of charities increases every year.

Progress in the orphanages visited was shown in proportion to the extent to which, first, the superintendent had prepared himself for his highly specialized calling, by a thorough educational and pedagogic training, and was acquainted with current movements in other fields of social work as well as his own. There is scarcely any branch of philanthropic endeavor that does not touch the orphan home at some point as attendance at any conference will demonstrate. This, together with an open-minded acceptance of problems solved by his contemporaries, honest adaptation and initiative, brings to the head of a modern orphanage the reputation for authoritative administration that cannot easily be ignored by his board of managers.

The second proportionate indication of comparative progress was shown where the board recognized its superintendent as an authority and gave him full control of the

policy it had outlined in conference with him. There can be little progress, if any, where the individual members of a board, however sincere they may be, are permitted to interfere with the administration or insist that personal ideas be adopted. I have seen one orphanage where the superintendent's principal thought was directed toward justifying himself to certain members of his board. This is the very lowest type visited and both superintendent and board should be removed; the effect upon the children is not wholesome and the institution falls into the anomalous class, in which unfortunately there are others, of being maintained by the children for the glorification of its officers.

A possibly hypercritical objection has been raised in some institutions where perfect accord exists between executive and directorate in the extreme development of teamwork to the extent that the teams overlap and get in one another's way; also the possible creation of false ideas in the minds of the children of the value of their labor in later years through the plan of paying them for work done while in the institution. These are by no means so vital as the really objectionable other extreme where no understanding or co-operation prevails in the direction and administration of the institution. As a result of the haphazard undirected spiritual, intellectual and physical growth of the children, they merely vegetate during the time of their dependency and are not prepared in any way to meet the inevitable competition which will be found beyond the gates of their narrow world. These are the ne'er-do-wells which bring odium upon all child-caring institutions. They are the "institution types" who believe that the world is against them, who cannot retain positions and help to make up our quota of failures; they are even said to be found in our prisons. The first extreme is not a fatal one and is to be infinitely preferred, for it is from this class of institutions that we find the higher types of men and women who have ceased to be dependents before they leave the guidance of those pioneers and leaders in the most advanced phases of child-caring methods. It is in these educational institutions that thoughtful foresight has anticipated the problems that will meet the dependent child

upon beginning his acquaintance with the real world of men and affairs. The importance of keeping in frequent touch with their wards for many years is realized; post-institutional work has come to be regarded as constructive as any other of their activities, for it is not believed that responsibility ceases before the boy or girl has become industrially and morally independent.

Despite the high standards already maintained and in prospect, there is no question of the higher desirability of finding private homes for dependent children. The recent excuse made in Massachusetts for a return to institutional care of children, that the available number of suitable homes had been exhausted, is a sad commentary upon what is considered an enlightened civilization. Instead of pleas to individuals for brick and mortar there should be appeals to hearts for homes. It is more economical in the beginning and end.

One of the homes visited and which I felt justified in enumerating among the total number mentioned was that maintained by Mrs. Dorsey in Rochester. This woman of humble origin takes into her home any colored child who needs protection. In support of her charity she receives from the county \$2.25 in behalf of one child; from the poormaster of the city \$2 worth of groceries; from the foster-mother (sic) of one of the children \$2, and an average from all other sources of \$1—a total of \$7.25 per week. This income is supplemented by what Mrs. Dorsey earns by washing clothes, in which she is *not* assisted by the children, and her husband's earnings as a canvasser. She has one assistant who lives with her—pensioned by the local charities. At the time of my visit she had thirteen children with her. Without approving of the facilities she has for her purpose or inquiring into the caloric value of the food dispensed (though the appearance of the children indicates that this is high enough), I wish to applaud the spirit of sacrifice prompting this intelligent woman to give aid and love to the helpless and undesired. It is this spirit which must be awakened in people before "suitable homes" can be offered and found. Mrs. Dorsey's children show a spontaneous affection for her that cannot be misconstrued, which counterbalances many of the objections that have been made

against the inadequate home. What of the other tiny orphan asylums scattered throughout the country? Many of them have never had the light of publicity which they in all probability need, but there are also others which may throw some light to those who are trying to solve the problems of the macroscopic institution. Available literature on the subject treats only of results obtained in the latter, but none concerning the small ones harboring communities of thirty or less. Perhaps Mrs. Dorsey has shown us the way after all, and like the late Booker Washington may solve a problem not only for her race but for us all.

### INDIANAPOLIS INVITES

The Indianapolis Jewry were very pleased to learn that the next meeting of the National Conference of Jewish Charities will be held in May in our "no mean city." Time flies, and we shall soon be honored with the presence of the greatest men and women engaged in social work throughout the United States. It will be our first opportunity to meet and to greet so noted and learned a body of social workers, and we shall be happy to extend to them a genuine Jewish and Hoosier hospitality. It is our hope that this meeting will be one of the most successful and beneficial ever held and we can do our part to make it so.

We realize that Indianapolis will have nothing new to offer to our visitors in the way of Jewish institutions and activities, but we trust that we shall be able to demonstrate to the members of the Conference a spirit of true Jewishness, philanthropy and hospitality, which is after all the first and the last principle of all social work. What the community can do to assist the Conference will be stated in our next Bulletin. In the meantime, the Indianapolis Jewry, through the Jewish Federation, extends the heartiest invitation to all the workers of the country to be with us in May.

The General National Conference of Charities and Corrections will be held in Indianapolis following the National Jewish Conference, and our community will do its share to make this Conference a success also. We wish to extend to all its members a most cordial invitation.