A GOOD UNDERSTANDING.

By Dr. S. P. Robins.

Very often precision of thought depends on the ability to hold steadily before the mind the several classes into which, by the use of language, an aggregate of individuals has been divided. The exercises that follow demand a clear and untroubled conception of an aggregate of beggars divided into groups by the adjectives " blind " and " lame," with the necessary implication of their negatives "not-blind " and " not-lame." As these two dichotomous divisions are made simultaneously in thought, the ultimate result is the formation of four classes ; those beggars that are both blind and lame, those that are blind but not lame, those that are lame but not blind, and lastly, those that are neither lame nor blind. The reader who at once sees the truth of the several necessarily correct statements that follow, and detects the one untruth, and who answers with promptness and accuracy the questions proposed, may be congratulated on the possession of an understanding originally good and subsequently well-trained.

Of all the beggars who come to my door :

1. If those who are blind be omitted, the rest who are not lame are neither blind nor lame.

2. Omitting those that are lame but not blind, they are either blind, or neither lame nor blind.

3. If I record the numbers of the blind and of the lame, I shall count twice the blind that are lame and shall omit altogether those that are neither blind nor lame.

4. The number of those that are both blind and lame, if greater than that of those who are neither blind nor lame, exceeds it just as much as the number of the blind exceeds the number of those that are not lame.

5. The excess, if any, of the number of the blind above the number of the lame is as great as the excess of those who are not lame above those who can see, or of those who are not lame added to those who are both blind and lame above all who are lame with those who are neither blind nor lame.

6. Those who are not lame, together with those who are both blind and lame, are always equal in number to those who are blind, together with those who are neither lame nor blind.