

USEFUL BOOKS.

CHILD TRAINING.—A system of education for the child under school age, by V. M. Hillyer, head master of Calvert school, New York. The Century Company, 1915; \$1.60 net.

Here is a book that we should like to put into the hands of every primary teacher, and of every mother who is attempting to get her young children into good habits. Intended more especially for the guidance of mothers and untrained teachers, it is full of valuable suggestions for every one who has much to do with children. For the primary school particularly, it furnishes plans for work and play that will brighten many a school day, and prepare the child to take full advantage of later opportunities.

The book contains no new or untried theories. It is practical, definite in its instructions, illustrates freely, and has the confident tone that comes of successful experience. The writer's aim, he tells us, is to produce "children who will be more observant and attentive, with more originality and initiative and sharper wits; who will think and act more quietly, be better informed and more accomplished, more skilful with their hands, more courteous and considerate of others." *These qualities and habits should not be incidental in education; they should be acquired by direct drill. This is the work that should be done.* The italicised words, though not word for word quotation, express the distinctive contention of the author.

By far the greater portion of the book is given to showing the practical application of the principle that qualities are to be developed and habits acquired by drill. General instructions take up about eighteen pages. These deal with the routine and method of training, the question of punishments and rewards, and the acquisition of speed and concentration. Then follows a number of programmes, adapted for both home and school work, for the individual child, and for small or large classes.

Part II. will be most interesting to the primary teacher, containing, as it does, details of habit drills. The first drill is for obedience, first to the simplest orders, sometimes to be obeyed by imitation of the teacher. Terms of direction are taught. Then come drills to teach obedience and attention. The orders are given quietly and not repeated. Deferred orders drill for obedience, attention, and memory. A

list of orders is read; e. g., John, shut the door. Mary, open the book. Harry, walk to the desk, Jane, pick up the pencil. After the list is read, each child is expected to obey his or her own order, without asking to have it repeated. Negative orders involve training in another habit. The order is given, "Don't look round," and the teacher makes noises behind the children to test their power of self-control. In connection with this, Mr. Hillyer notes that teachers are often told "Don't say *don't*", "but inhibition — which is the suppression of desire to do the forbidden thing — is an important habit to be cultivated, and though it is perfectly true that the unfamiliar, the unlikely to happen, is as a rule best left unmentioned, nevertheless, for purposes of discipline, practice in obeying negative commands is highly important, as most laws, from the Decalogue down, are prohibitions, "Thou shalt not."

Another drill is on obedience to orders involving judgment; e. g., "Close the window." The child must not ask which window to close, but must think for himself which window is letting in rain or a cold wind. "Bring me my hat." The child must not say "Where is it?" but find it; and so on. Other drills are on carrying messages, on order and neatness, observation, association and imagination.

Part III. is devoted to story telling. On this subject the writer has sound and decided views. Among the kinds of stories to be told to children he enumerates: 1. Hero stories, and those that deal with courage, truth and other virtues; these instil ideals. 2. Fanciful tales, for stimulating imaginations and giving a delight in the world. 3. Humorous and nonsense stories, for helping the child to get fun out of life, and giving him an antidote against dreary over-seriousness. Among stories to be avoided he includes tales that make wrong attractive, and tales of bogies and horrors. He warns us that commonsense (we would suggest also, a sense of humour) is necessary in expurgating stories, and tells of a mother who objected to the nursery rhyme of "Three Blind Mice," on the ground that it taught cruelty to animals. [A more extreme case is that of the children whose nurse was forbidden to say to them "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat, where have you been?" because it ended with the line about a little mouse being frightened] Mr.