

For the REVIEW].

A USEFUL BOOK.

"Conscious Motherhood" is the suggestive title of a recently published book which is worthy the attentive consideration of parents and teachers. The name of the author, Miss Emma Marwedel, is a guarantee that this is an interesting and valuable educational work. Its title strikes the key note: scientific principles and an intelligent application of them in the early training of the infant, *versus* instinct blindly following tradition. Educated with German thoroughness, she is a kindergartener whose deep insight into Fröbel's system has enabled her to carry out to their logical conclusions some ideas which he had not fully elaborated. In 1876, when she went from Washington to the Centennial to exhibit her kindergarten training classes, she gave utterance to her conviction "that the ball, as representing the sphere, the type of all life, was not made sufficiently prominent in Fröbel's development of the child." In 1882 her "thoughts were so far crystallized" that she presented her "Circular Drawing System, or Childhood's Poetry and Study in the Life and Forms of Nature," together with a Botany and seventeen Classification Charts for the consideration of the North American Fröbel Institute in session at Detroit. This distinguished body gave their unqualified approval and urged its publication, in a series of resolutions, appointing a committee to confer with publishers, etc. "But with all this encouragement, I was still unsatisfied. I felt that I had not yet touched the right spot in human existence, whereon to base the fair structure of human education. . . . Thought upon thought drove me back over the steps the human being traces in his ascent to manhood. I reached the home, the mother, the cradle. Then, at last, in the mother, to whom Fröbel dedicated the first use of the curve, I found the place where the corner-stone of any genuine education must be laid. But where to find that stone which should become 'the head of the corner?' . . . A remarkable book—the first of its kind in range and profundity—fell into my hands at this period. It was the work entitled the 'Soul of the Child,' by Prof. Wilhelm Preyer, of Jena, received by me as a providential answer to my question. And this, which answers not my question only, but every query as to the when, and the how, and the wherefore, which mothers and *all other educators* ask concerning the earliest physical, mental and moral needs of the child, seemed to me a boon which should not be willingly withheld for one single hour from those upon whom are laid grave responsibilities from the first day."

The first part of the book is a careful psycho-

physiological treatment of principles of early education. The method by which the senses may be cultivated as means to the mental, moral and spiritual development of the child is given with clearness, and should command the study of intelligent teachers and parents. The tenth chapter, written by special request of Miss Peabody and others, "The Ideal Nursery," gives an extended account of the writer's system of "drawing on the curve," "color games," and plays for specially exercising the senses; the use of the sand-table in drawing, geography, etc.; the clever arrangements of her own beautiful kindergarten in California, and is full of hints as to the use of cheap and common materials for educational purposes which would prove serviceable to our teachers.

The second part (228 pages) is a translation of all those portions of Preyer's diary which illustrate the first part of this work. The Professor made and recorded, with only two trifling interruptions, for three years, morning, noon and night, his observations which began, five minutes after birth, by testing the sense of sight. Many, Darwin among others, have observed and registered their observations occasionally, but Preyer's observations were made so systematically, and they are so acute, truthful and discriminating that they mark an epoch in the study of child culture. Published in Germany in 1882, the centenary of Fröbel's birth, they establish on a scientific basis the pedagogics of that great genius. From different points of approach Fröbel and Preyer reach the same conclusions. In his preface, given in full, he asserts that, no matter how individuals may differ, the *order* of development is the same in all; heredity is as important a factor in psychogenesis as individual activity; that scientific observation of the *child*, from the *earliest date*, must be made if education is to be a success.

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C.

For S.P.C.A. Column EDUCATIONAL REVIEW].

CHILDREN'S INFLUENCE.

It is one of the best and happiest aspects of this present civilization that in nearly all great movements designed for the progress and benefit of mankind, there are ways and means by which the children can help on the work. In the missionary field there is an army of children working with earnest endeavor to forward the greatest and highest project of the time; among the undaunted persistent temperance workers the little ones have their societies and "cold water armies; in the church are the Sunday-schools, the sewing circles, the various associations, in all of which the children bear an active part. In all public and private demonstrations they are foremost in the