completely furnished throughout, and is tastefully decorated. The dining-room is oak-panelled, and the chairs in it are upholstered in leather. On the walls are plaques and willow-pattern plates. The sitting-room furniture is covered in brocade. The piano, made of paduck wood, has a hinged lid and music rest; the keyboard consists of separately cut notes. On two sides of this room are shelves containing 168 suede-covered books with gilt edges. It contains also a nest of tables, a standard lamp and pictures. The latter are all copies of exhibits in the Royal Academy. The furniture of the bedroom is made of rosewood. This apartment contains a hand-woven carpet, twin beds, a wardrobe, a dressing-table, with hinged mirrors, rush-seated chairs, electric radiator, etc. The kitchen floor is covered with stencilled linoleum, and in this room are found a Dutch dresser, a roll-top sink, table and chairs. On the range are pots and pans. In the bathroom, the floor of which is tiled, is a bath and washhand basin with taps, a cork-seated stool, etc. All the rooms, the entrance hall and staircase are lit by electricity, and each lamp and radiator has its own switch. The house, furniture, etc., solely the work of patients, it took four months to complete.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL HYGIENE.

DAME MARY SCHARLEIB, *D.B.E.*, M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S., gave an address at the Fifth Annual Meeting of the National Council for Mental Hygiene, which was held on December 9, 1927, in the Hall of the College of Nursing, London.

[*An Abstract.*]

She said: I have long felt that the study of mental hygiene is badly neglected, not only by the public, which is excusable, but by our own beloved profession, which is by far less excusable. The truth is that the study of mental hygiene is not at all a welcome subject. We have schools for the tubercular, for the ordinary physically defective and for the mentally defective children. Now, if anyone were invited to go and see any hospital or school for children who had some physical ailment or deformity, blindness, deafness, they would gladly go. They would say they were so sorry for these poor little children, and they were so sorry for their parents and their families, but if you were to ask anyone to go to a mental hospital or a school for mentally deficient children they would say, "Oh, I would rather not. That is just not the thing that I would like to do. I do not understand anything about it." Well, that is very true; they do not understand anything about it; but I assure you—indeed most of you know this—that the prevalence of mental deficiency is one of the vital questions for the Empire at the present day. I have been involved once before in a most unpopular cause, and that was the cause which gave rise to the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease presided over by Lord Sydenham from 1913 to 1916. We worked hard for those three years, and at the end Lord Sydenham said to us, "Your work here on this subject is done. Your work outside is now going to begin. Those of you who can speak must speak. Those of you who can write must write. You must all use your influence, and you must all talk about it, until the people understand that the disease is preventable, and is to be prevented; that it is curable and is to be cured. I engage you all to go out and be missionaries in this cause." Well, I think we did as our Chairman asked. A very large number on that Commission were doctors, and I am sure that we all most faithfully preached on this subject, unpleasant as it was. You know the result; you know how wonderfully the knowledge of the public on this subject has improved.

Now, it is exactly the same with regard to mental hygiene. We have got to make people see that there is nothing in the subject so offensive, so repellent, or so difficult as to justify the public in paying no attention to it. I am an old woman, and I remember well the mid-Victorian days, the days of the Daisy Chain, the days of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and so on, and I remember how the hearts of all my old friends, with the children and the young people of these days, went out towards the attractive hero and the delicate heroine, the people who were always breaking blood-vessels and making a mess of one sort or another. How many mid-Victorian novels owed their charm and interest to a lame, blind, or consumptive hero? Now would a book have sold whose chief interest centred round a mental defective? The mother who has a child afflicted with

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deficiency of a leg, an eye, an ear, or a nose, or any trouble of that sort, is assured of any amount of sympathy and support. If she is a poor woman people will fall over themselves to send the child away for better air, to an open-air school, or to some other suitable place. These things ought to be done certainly. Yes, but we ought not to leave the mentally afflicted child out from our practical sympathy.

The consequence of our gross neglect of mental hygiene is that many young people drift over the border-line who might be saved. Many a child who might have been trained to do something useful is left until he sinks from being a case of feeble-mindedness into real imbecility. Of course we know the scientific definition that idiots, imbeciles and the feeble-minded are those people who have been afflicted from birth or from early years. But it is wonderful how much can be done for the feeble-minded people.

Some little time ago, having in mind to write a small book on the subject, I visited various schools for the feeble-minded, and I was very much struck with the fine work that they were able to do. Of course these feeble-minded people would never be able of themselves to set to work; they would not be able to procure the wood for their wood-carving; they would not be able to get the material to cut out the frames that they made; they would not be able to initiate patterns for their crochet and other things, but the skill and dexterity with which they were able to execute wood-carving, their iron-work, bookmaking, cobbling, needlework, embroidery, knitting and crochet is wonderful.

The thing is that nearly all those we call feeble-minded, in contra-distinction to the imbecile and the idiot, have some gift that can be cultivated. In the very early months and years of their life no doubt they are best at home if their mothers or other members of the family are willing to take the necessary trouble to teach them how to use their fingers, to teach them how to wash, dress and feed themselves and the elementary rules of personal cleanliness and good behaviour. But when school days come the ordinary school is not the best place for the feeble-minded. I not infrequently inspect schools, and I can pick out the children who are manifestly doing no good whatever. They are sitting there occupying a place, but the instruction does not profit them at all. Three great injustices are being perpetrated.

The first person injured by the presence of these children is the teacher. Teachers know that they are responsible for the teaching they impart, for its being the best of its kind, but the teacher who has in his class three or four mentally deficient children comes to acquiesce quite comfortably in there being on the benches before him children who are not taking in any of the instruction. That is a moral injustice to the teacher. Then it is bad for the normal children; they learn to afflict and torment these deficient children, which is wrong. As to the mentally defective children, the injustice to them is the worst of all, because it is only during the early years that the faculties of mind they do possess can be cultivated and something made of them. But in the special schools and institutions every faculty that the children do possess is carefully cultivated and so something is saved out of the wreck, so that the children are eventually able to contribute towards their own support even although they may not become fully self-supporting.

The National Council of Mental Hygiene, whose cause I plead, was founded only four years ago. So it is still in its infancy, but it is a very vigorous infant. It would be still more vigorous if it could get more nourishment. You will see, I am sure, that it does get the nourishment that is needed. You are believers, and I need not implore you to be converted, but what are you to do? I have never heard of a really good institution of any kind that was not imbued with the proselytising and the propaganda spirit, and that is what you must cultivate. You must do what the members of Lord Sydenham's Commission did with their friends, their relations, their patients and the public in general. You must make people see that there is nothing more dreadful, nothing more wicked, nothing more distressing in not being able to add two and two and say that it is four than it is to be deficient in any other way. You must rid people of the popular fallacy that mental deficiency is a disgrace. The mentally deficient are born so, and they are far more to be pitied than those who are blind or deaf, and yet they do not get anything like the help or the sympathy which those do who have only physical defects.

I want for the benefit of those who are not members of the Council to tell you something of its aims. The Council is anxious to bring mental diseases into the fold of general diseases, and one way of doing it is to secure the affiliation of mental

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hospitals to general hospitals. That has already been done in several instances. (Cheers.) I hope it will be done more and more. I was talking the other day with the distinguished President of the hospital in which I have for many years been much interested and telling him of a proposal of this kind, and he said, "What an admirable idea; I hope that my hospital will soon be affiliated to one of the mental hospitals near London."

Another aim of the Council is to institute research in regard to all types of mental deficiency. A deeply interesting type is the Moral Imbecile, who often seems to have nothing amiss with his intellect. But it is from the ranks of the Moral Imbecile that many murderers, the forgers, the embezzlers and clever criminals are drawn. We want to know a great deal about the numbers of the cases that exist in order that proper accommodation should be provided for them and that something should be done to reduce the number and to prevent the propagation of such sufferers.

Then there is the crying need for facilities for the early treatment of mental disorders. There is a large number of people who might be saved from insanity if they were treated early enough. Early treatment for diphtheria—certainly, within twenty-four hours. Early treatment for tuberculosis—yes, as soon as desired. Early treatment for mental trouble—well, not until it is so bad that it cannot be concealed is at present the rule.

Another thing at which the Council aims is the administration of mental hospitals—much too large a subject for us to talk about to-night, but these hospitals need reform from time to time just as other hospitals do. And then there is the provision for the after-care of mental cases. Just as not infrequently patients leave a general hospital after an operation or an illness cured, so patients are discharged from a mental hospital as cured, *i. e.*, cured, but with the same tendency remaining. The same thing that caused trouble before may cause trouble again, and unless after-care be provided they go home to the very same aggravating set of circumstances that sent them wrong before. This ought never to happen, and to stimulate after-care work is one of the objects of this infant Society.

Another thing in which the Council is much interested is the Registration of Mental Homes. We want to know where these places are; we want to know who is responsible for the patients, and what is done for them. Simply to house patients, give them food, warmth and comfortable beds is not enough.

One point more, and that is the education of the medical profession in this branch of medicine, and especially the education of medical students. The medical students, it is quite true, have plenty to do, but they need more instruction in mental hygiene. If the clinical teachers knew something of mental science and mental disabilities and applied it to their ordinary cases, we should soon find the students taking an interest in the mental side of patients too.

Dame Mary concluded her speech with an eloquent appeal for funds to aid the National Council in its great mission.

NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PSYCHOLOGY.

THE Ninth International Congress of Psychology will be held at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., probably in August or September, 1929.

The officers of the Congress are as follows: President, J. McKeen Cattell, of New York; Vice-President, James R. Angell, of Yale University; Secretary, Edwin G. Boring, of Harvard University; Treasurer, R. S. Woodworth, of Columbia University; Foreign Secretary, Herbert S. Langfeld, of Princeton University; Executive Secretary, Walter S. Hunter, of Clark University; Chairman of the Programme Committee, Raymond Dodge, of Yale University; Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements, R. P. Angier, of Yale University.

This is the first meeting of the Congress in America. The previous meetings have been as follows; Paris, 1889; London, 1892; Munich, 1896; Paris, 1900; Rome, 1905; Geneva, 1909; Oxford, 1923; Groningen, 1926. It is expected that the Congress in the United States will be truly international in character. The Americans hope that the appointment of some foreigners for lectures and

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