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The Industrial Education of the Crippled and Deformed.

There is a growing tendency on the part of those who are engaged in public as well as private philanthropy to direct their efforts toward the prevention of dependency rather than simply to provide care for those who become dependent. This tendency finds expression in many ways which are comparatively new. To some of us, at least, none of the newer ways of providing against dependency is more interesting or more profitable than the correction of deformity in children or the proper care of those prospective cripples suffering from chronic disease. A surprisingly large number of such patients, especially if cared for during childhood, may be converted from helplessness to a state of complete or comparative independence.

Those of us who have been engaged for some years in the hospital care of these children, however, are having it forced upon us that hospital care alone is not sufficient to establish the permanent independence of such individuals. A considerable number of our orthopedic patients are, by reason of the nature of their disabilities, unable to avail themselves of the ordinary opportunities for acquiring an education. It is not uncommon, therefore, for such patients at the completion of their hospital care to find themselves several years behind normal children of the same age in the matter of their school work. Not only this, but many of these patients even at the comple-

tion of hospital care and when all has been done for them that can be done, find themselves physically unequal to the performance of all the duties of any given trade or occupation. The mere statement of the problem suggests the answer, which is that such children during their hospital care and afterwards should be carried along by means of special methods of instruction, so that when the hospital care has been completed they may, as rapidly as possible, be provided with such an education as will enable them, no matter what their condition, to perform some duties by which they can earn a livelihood.

A number of industrial training schools have already been established, but a very small percentage indeed of such patients can now be cared for with the educational facilities that are available. For example, the Widener Memorial School at Philadelphia, which is one of the finest examples in the world of the form of philanthropy which I have suggested, has a million dollar plant, with an endowment of three millions more, but limits itself to the care of less than two hundred children. All of these children in the Widener School, however crippled or deformed, are being given the best of hospital care and provided with such instruction as will render them absolutely independent. This agency is, therefore, doing a tremendous amount of good and doing it in as nearly an ideal manner as possible. It can readily be seen, however, that many more such agencies, even if they must be carried on at less expense of money, must be provided for such individuals.

The Nebraska Orthopedic Hospital has made a beginning in this direction, but only a beginning. All of our children, both those who are up and the bed patients who are able to do so, recite daily to competent teachers in lessons which correspond as nearly as possible to those which children of the same age are having in the grade schools. Cooking, sewing and bookbinding are also being taught to those who are able to do those kinds of work. Other courses of instruction contemplated at the present time are horticulture, picture framing and photography. Two of the older girls, formerly patients in our

hospital, are already independent; one is a seamstress and the other a telephone operator.

It is quite important for the institution which provides hospital care to supervise the launching of these patients in occupations which will make them independent. There is a great danger that such patients if returned to their homes, either because of lack of means or because of over sympathy on the part of parents or friends, even though much improved as to their physical condition, will relapse into a state of dependency. Constant stimulation and intelligent supervision are necessary with these children as with others to have them use such energy and ability as they have toward proper ends. Teachers and equipment must be provided in increasing measure to supplement our hospital work if a full realization is to be obtained of the plan to make these patients independent.

The State of Nebraska has been making rapid progress along the lines of caring for its orthopedic patients and by doing just a little more our institution will stand in the very forefront of those which are being devoted to work of this particular kind.

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