EDITORIAL

CULTURE is, by one lexicographer, defined as "the training, development, or strengthening of the powers, mental or physical, or the condition thus produced."

It seems to us that perhaps all (and that is much) that the Toronto Conference had to contribute to the case work field might be epitomized in culture, using that pregnant word in its really dynamic sense. Even then we should broaden it, or rather limit "powers" to those which are personal and environmental rather than mental or physical.

It was culture not only because the springs of human behavior and thought, as revealed in the lives of a selected group, were described in a way which marks definitely an advance (not so much in the case work actually being done as in the profitable presentation of the higher kind) but also because there was presented, never more insistently, the problems of case work in all the media of people and their relationships through whose texture social case work webs to its ends.

The Family Division of the Conference and the American Association of Family Social Work offered, in fact, the most remarkable group of papers on individual case work which has ever been presented. There have been as strong or stronger single addresses, but never such a series of highly intensive descriptions of how a certain few individual and family problems had been jointly worked with by client connections and case worker; never such a group of analyses and syntheses in the study of the development of personality in the social case work field.

At the same time there never was greater emphasis placed upon what a board member should be and do; the right relationships between staff member, general secretary, and board; the ethics of the social case worker himself in his relations to his client.

Furthermore, there rose to the surface in formal and informal ways what has already been discussed in smaller circles. What is the challenge which intensive social case work makes to the communities in which it grows, and what is the challenge which the communities make to the intensive case work agencies? Long ago, Providence be thanked, we developed sense enough to say that we could not do all the possible case work nor would we try to spread ourselves too thin over this tremendous area. An occasional dilution of effort is of course a possibility, but it should not become permanent. But is it enough for us to do intensive work, to carry on educational campaigns, to train volunteers? How about our participation in more directly assisting the semi- or non-professional case work groups to carry their work up step by step? Merely to state the problem indicates how comparatively little we have done. We shall lose ourselves whenever the more highly developed work alone engrosses us.

So the wideflung variation of questions which particularly interested our group in Toronto—never more wideflung, never more varied—coupled with the fact that the analyses of personality problems reached high water mark, showed that family case work had reached the point in development where, indeed, its culture could be claimed.

A great and memorable conference—as the papers from its Proceedings which will appear in this and succeeding issues of The Family will most vividly show. And still they will but reveal certain phases of what was discussed in Toronto. It is significant, indeed, that intensive case work cannot by its very nature be interpreted in terms of the clients and case workers alone.

PROBABLY many readers of The Family have been so fortunate as to see regularly the Literary Review, which used to be published every week as a supple-
ment to the New York Evening Post. We say "used to be" for, though it still appears, it is the shadow of its former self and there has been an entire change of management. Many social workers who found in the old Review the best writing, the best reviewing, and the most trustworthy comment on happenings in the book world that had ever appeared in this country, were sore at heart when they found that big business, in combination with quantity production standards and a spurious idea of "what the people want," had destroyed their weekly visitor.

Imagine their satisfaction, then, to find that all the staff who made that weekly journal such a treat—Henry Canby, Christopher Morley, William Rose Benét, and all the others—are starting a new weekly Saturday Review of Literature. Contributors of the very best in England and this country are already pledged to write for it. It costs $3 a year, and its office of publication is 236 East 39th Street, New York City.

Humanitarians, it is charged, often neglect the humanities. Here is a chance to cultivate them at the fountain head. Someone has said that the only "I" Dr. Canby knows is the "i" in literature. There never was a saner, more hospitable, less prejudiced guide to whatever is best in both literature and science. To the social worker who wishes, with small expenditure of time, to keep in touch with the world's best thinking on other subjects than just his own, we heartily commend this investment.

THE USE OF BEAUTY IN CASE WORK

MARGARET E. RICH

N O MAN, according to Walter Page, can be a gentleman unless he has a sense of humor. Social workers have long accepted as a truism the need for a similar sense of humor among members of the profession, and I am afraid that their need for a sense of beauty is equally bromidic. My fear comes from the feeling that we tend to keep this, along with many other obvious facts, shut up in boxes, and but rarely take them out for an airing. In taking beauty out for an airing today, it is not so much with the idea of adding anything to our knowledge of it or to our realization of our need for it in our lives and in the lives of those whom we serve, but rather because I am convinced that even those things which are most a part of us need the freshening which such an airing brings. As for defining beauty, I am not sufficiently ambitious to attempt to cover in half an hour the ground which the philosophers have been plowing for upward of two thousand years.

We may agree with Plato that the deformed is inharmonical with the divine, and the beautiful always harmonious; or with Professor Kallen who tells us that beauty brings the personality into unity, that conflict is resolved by the triumph of the beautiful, that beauty makes for harmony within the individual, that beauty is not a quality of the object but our relation to it. Christopher Morley puts the same thought in yet a different way: "Beauty lies not in ourselves merely but in some sudden congruence between our lovelier perceptions and the actual lineaments of the world."

For the time being, let us agree to accept beauty as an attitude of mind. For each of us there is some thing, or many things—a picture, a flower, a poem, a book, some music, a varied assortment limited or enlarged by the manifold influences of heredity, environment, education and opportunity—which make for harmony within our souls. Whatever does that for any one of us earns the name of beauty. As to what constitutes beauty of line or color or sound or those more abstract and indefinable lovelinesses of the spirit—of right living, of sacrifice, and courage, and the fine spirit of daring—I have not the skill to discuss, and furthermore I am convinced that there is no such thing as an all-inclusive category.

The social case worker who realizes that science and art must supplement one another,