

Teaching in the class-rooms has been carried on with the same vigour as in the past. Its results vary with the mental capacity of the pupils. In some instances outsiders describe them as excellent, or, as some put it, wonderful; but the director, knowing how easily the uninitiated are carried away by mere sound or voice, cannot, with his greater experience, fully indorse such flattering opinions; in fact, in several cases he might feel inclined to reverse the visitors' verdict. Professionally speaking, the progress on the whole, that of the mentally-weak excepted, may be best described as creditable.

The fact of a large percentage of weak-minded children being met with amongst deaf-mutes in all parts of the world has led modern science to pay more than ordinary attention to the circumstance. In Denmark and Sweden a law is actually in operation enacting that all newcomers, on entering the institution, shall be examined by the director, so that the weak-minded may be separated from those who possess normal faculties. On page 236, No. 8, *Organ der Taubstummen Anstalten in Deutschland*, edited by Vatter, will be found (translated): "The model institution of the future for deaf-mutes should provide for the separation of the weak-minded deaf-mutes from those who have their normal faculties. The institution in Schleswig, and the one at Wilhelmsdorf, Wurtemberg, already carry out the work of such separation. Other institutions have so far been obliged to postpone it. (Be it remembered that Denmark and Sweden enforce this division by law.) . . . " For shortness' sake, I direct those interested to *Organ* 1879, Nos. 5 and 6, and again to *Organ* 1888, pages 13 to 17. Our pupils, unfortunately, also vary greatly in their intellectual powers. After a twelve months' course of training, 75 per cent. have usually outstripped the rest, not only in their better comprehension of language and greater store of information, but also in their better mode and greater facility of acquiring knowledge. In justice to all, the director was bound, on this account, to divide the total number of pupils at the beginning of the year into nine divisions. By doing this the best interests of the school were studied. Truly one evil arose—namely, that of the ninth division being overplus, for only eight divisions can be attended to by four assistant teachers; but the director overcame this objection by undertaking the teaching of the youngest or articulation class chiefly himself.

The lessons in drawing have again been attended to by Miss Rosa Budden, of Christchurch. Most of the pupils are doing fair work in this branch, some good; but as yet none have shown any preponderating talent. Religious instruction by means of Scripture lessons has this year been taken up as one of the ordinary class subjects. A small book entitled "Scripture Lessons for the Young," by Harvey P. Peet, LL.D., New York, specially written for the instruction of deaf-mutes, is being read and explained. The director followed it for years with marked success with his pupils in England. For simplicity, clearness, and compactness it has not been, as yet, superseded by any other in the English language. I enclose a copy.

The conduct of the inmates has been of an exemplary nature; they are helpful and kind to one another, and none of them seem to tire of the hours of instruction. With eager eyes they watch for fresh knowledge; and to the upper classes, the perusal of the daily newspaper seems to have become a necessity, as well as a treat.

The director still reads with great interest the most scientific publication of the time on the subject of deaf-mute education—the *Organ der Taubstummen Anstalten in Deutschland*, edited by Vatter, and published by Bindernagel, Friedberg. Although a purely technical work, to students of psychology, of the science of language, and to aurists, its articles offer much food for reflection. To experts engaged in the education of the deaf it is an absolute necessity.

In reference to the under-mentioned invention by Monsieur Verrier, it may be explained that amongst the numerous cases of deaf-mutism about 50 per cent. are found to be not absolutely deaf, and probably 25 per cent. are sensitive to loudly-spoken sounds. Of the latter again, a portion would never have remained speechless but for the fact of their being deaf in infancy and childhood, for be it remembered that to acquire speech is a different matter from retaining it. It is a special claim of the articulation method, and it can be proved by practical illustrations in the Sumner institution, that by its means ten per cent. of the pupils learn to appreciate, at a short distance, clearly enunciated language; in other words, articulated words once learned as to their meaning by artificial means are recognised later on through the ordinary channel of hearing. In all such cases the use of an improved ear-tube, as referred to below, may probably be of practical benefit. Such is doubtless the meaning when my friends in Rotterdam refer to the invention of an improved ear-tube in their report of 1890–91 as one worthy of notice; and for the same reason I beg to enclose translation.

Let me conclude by comparing an institution for deaf-mutes to a complicated and expensive piece of machinery. It may be of material the newest, constructed on the most improved principles, but unless the material of such mechanism be sound and flawless, the energetic force of the fuel ample, and the lubricating matter unstinted, the machine will not work well, nor will the manufactured article be good and durable. Your director has seen institutions where some of these conditions were wanting. In a few instances he has seen antiquated methods, in other poor buildings and scanty means; but in no instance was the work more to be deplored than in that where the finest results were within reach, except for the energetic, concentrated, intellectual, heat-giving force of the teachers. Let me hope, in the interests of the poor deaf-mutes of this colony, such may never be the case in New Zealand.

The Hon. W. P. Reeves, Minister of Education, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

G. VAN ASCH.

*Enclosure in No. 2.*

On page 20 of the report for 1891 of the Institution for Deaf-mutes, Rotterdam, mention is made of an invention by the Abbé Verrier, of Paris, claiming to be of service in the oral instruction of deaf-mutes. The reporter, A. Symons, Esq., secretary and honorary aurist to the institution,