

With the lower-grade children, sense-training is an excellent feature of the school, and part of each school session is devoted to this work. The cultivation of the children's special senses—taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing—is very interesting work; and if, in the near future, we can model our Sense Room in the school on the lines adopted by some of the American institutions, we shall have made a valuable addition to our school work.

While dealing with the question of school work, and its value to the children as compared with manual and industrial occupations, I cannot refrain from quoting from the recent reports of some of the leading institutions in England, from which it is clearly seen that the general opinion of the experts at Home is that it is to the latter—viz., the manual and industrial occupations—that we have to look for the greatest improvement in the children.

In a recent annual report of the Superintendent at Star Cross, in Devonshire, we find stated, "The training of the pupils continues to develop satisfactorily on the same lines—that is to say, by combining a maximum of manual instruction with a minimum of scholastic work—for it is by this method that the best results are obtained." And later we find, "Important, however, as is the scholastic instruction of the pupils, it is to the manual training we attach the most importance. Some children, owing to mental defect, seem quite incapable of learning ordinary school lessons, and require years of patient effort to enable them to master even the letters of the alphabet, or to count correctly up to twenty. Yet in many instances these same children, if put to a handicraft, will, in much less time, learn to make a pair of boots, a suit of clothes, or a fancy basket. Hence, as soon as it is recognized that a boy will never get beyond spelling monosyllables, or making O's or X's on a slate, it is evident that further time spent upon his education in the schools will be, to a great extent, wasted, and, if his age and physique permit, he is accordingly taken off school work altogether, and transferred to the manual classes, where frequently he learns to make himself quite useful."

Again, in the latest report of the Eastern Counties Training Institution at Colechester, we find the Superintendent advances the same opinion. He says, "Acting on our past experience, we only keep those in the schools who are of school age, and as soon as possible we endeavour to teach them some industrial occupation." The general report for the year 1909 on the Sandlebridge Schools at Alderley Edge, near Manchester, states, "It becomes increasingly evident that, whilst it is desirable not to neglect reading, writing, and arithmetic, it is from manual training that we must expect the best results." And again, "The purely intellectual side of their education is not neglected; some of them can learn to read, and can do a certain amount of arithmetic. But these are amongst the highest grade, and even for them it is evident that manual instruction is the most valuable."

The evidence of the Superintendent of the Royal Albert Training Institution for the Feeble-minded at Lancaster, England, is also well worthy of perusal. Speaking of the reorganization of the school work in the institution on a system based upon their more intimate knowledge of the work after forty years, he says, "Mere school instruction, *per se*, is productive of little. Industrial training may, with advantage, go hand in hand with scholastic instruction, but in no case should a boy continue in school, however young, who is able to read and write: his place is on the industrial list, learning a trade. The elements of the industrial occupations could be taught in school, leaving the corresponding workshops available for the more advanced pupils. Nothing is better suited for the lower-grade boys than simple outdoor work in the gardens and grounds."

I entirely agree with these opinions, as they are quite in accord with my Home experiences. Accordingly, we are making our manual training and industrial occupations prominent features of our school work.

In addition to the farm and garden work, in which the boys are beginning to take an intelligent interest, we are now commencing to teach them matmaking, basketmaking, sashcord and rope making. Such occupations are very necessary, as we sometimes find boys who can never make any appreciable progress in school, and time spent in the listless contemplation of a blackboard is lost, whereas in the workshops they may eventually do good work.

Our teaching staff has been considerably augmented during the past year. I have now a lady teacher, and three trades masters for teaching woodwork, mat and basket making, and painting. Several of the boys are doing very good work in painting and decorating the new buildings now being erected at the school. One of the chief points in the treatment is to keep each boy constantly occupied. The beneficial results of this treatment are apparent by noting the improvement in the children, both mentally and physically. The dull and apathetic are roused to activity, the restless and noisy are restored to order, and the more intelligent develop habits of attention and diligence.

Seeing that manual instruction is the essential feature in the proper training of feeble-minded boys, it follows that a set of workshops is one of the indispensable requisites for our success, and I am hoping that before next year's annual report is written I shall have the authority of the Education Department to proceed with the erection of suitable buildings for carrying on this important branch of our work.

IMPROVEMENT.

When training institutions similar to ours at Otekaike were first founded it was thought that it would be possible to fit the feeble-minded for all the duties and enjoyments of life, so that they could carry out their individual duties of citizenship. After some years of experience, however, it was found that in the majority of cases this was an impossible task. The peculiarities of temperament, the lack of the inhibitory powers, apathy, and other idiosyncrasies which, more or less, are concomitants of mental defect, are generally so persistent that at no time can the majority of feeble-minded persons be looked upon as responsible members of society.