

ONTARIO INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND, BRANTFORD.

WHAT is meant by the term civilization? What is it that differentiates a civilized from an uncivilized people, and justifies the one in asserting for itself a higher degree of development than another? This question is difficult to answer in exact definitive terms, but for this, as in other matters, we have an infallible criterion given us by the highest authority. "By their fruit ye shall know them." What, then, are the tests by which to judge of the relative degrees of civilization? There are many such, involving every phase of human interrelations in all their political, sociological and ethical aspects. But probably the supreme test would be the degree to which the intellectual and moral development of the people are promoted—the character and adequacy of the provision made for the helpless and dependent classes, and especially the extent to which those members of the community who are deprived of some of the normal human senses and capabilities are looked after, both as to their physical comforts and as to their mental and moral training. Judged by these sure standards the Province of Ontario is entitled to rank among civilized states second to none other in the world. Not only have we, for those endowed with the normal senses and faculties, schools and colleges and universities that are unsurpassed in quality and in relative numbers, but also splendidly equipped institutions for the deaf and the blind; we have excellent hospitals and infirmaries for the sick; comfortable homes for the indigent aged and orphanages for the children; asylums for the mentally diseased and deficient, and reformatories and refuges for the morally deformed and perverted; in brief, educational and eleemosynary institutions suited to the requirements of every class and type, and which they may freely enjoy, not as a stint of charity, but as a right of citizenship and humanity.

Of these many institutions—splendid monuments, all of them, to the enlightened statesmanship and wise liberality of the Ontario Government and Legislature—none are better known, none more efficiently fulfilling their noble mission than the Institutions for the blind and the deaf. With the latter, and with the methods of instruction employed here, our readers are pretty thoroughly familiar, and in this issue we have pleasure in presenting a number of pictures of the Institution for the Blind at Brantford, both because of their intrinsic interest, and because, outside the blind themselves, no class of the community should feel more interested in them than the deaf, since both are deprived of one—though not the same—sense.

The Ontario Institution for the Blind was erected in 1872. It is a handsome, commodious structure,

and is entirely supported by the Province. It is beautifully situated just west of Brantford, and from its elevated position commands a fine view of the city, and of the river which winds among wooded heights at its base, while all its appointments and equipments are of the best. During the past 16 years the Institution has been presided over by Mr. A. H. Dymond, whose regime has been marked by steady advancement in methods and a gratifying continuity of success in results, so that the Institution at Brantford enjoys a record and reputation second to that of no similar institution on the continent. Mr. Dymond has always successfully striven to keep his school in the van of progress, and that his abilities and services are appreciated and recognized is demonstrated by the fact that he has been elected President of the American Association of Educators of the Blind. But a principal, however able, can accomplish but little himself, and Mr. Dymond has been fortunate in having associated with him a most efficient staff of officers and teachers, to whose unwearied efforts and intelligent skill are due the satisfactory results attained. Since its inception, some seven hundred young persons have availed themselves of the privileges it affords, the recent attendance ranging from 130 to 140. From this—as compared with the 270 attending the Institution at Belleville—it may be inferred that there are fewer blind than deaf persons in the Province; and it is gratifying to know that the number here and in other countries seems to be decreasing. Deafness is generally congenital, or produced from causes over which parents and physicians have little or no control; and, except in very rare instances, it is incurable. Blindness, on the contrary, is very frequently caused by over-straining of the eye, excessive study, poorly-lighted rooms and other preventable causes, and in many cases it is amenable to treatment. With the erection of properly constructed school-buildings, with the higher development of the oculist's skill, and with the advancement in hygienic and medical knowledge, a constant relative diminution in the number of the blind may be confidently looked for.

With regard to the mental aptitudes and characteristics of the blind, as compared with the deaf, or with hearing and seeing people, we are not qualified to speak. The objects of the two Institutions, however, and the ultimate purpose held in view in the educational processes adopted, are similar. They are, first to give the pupils a sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable them to communicate freely with other people, and to express their thoughts intelligently and intelligibly; and then to provide them with such specific instruction and training along practical lines as

will enable them to enjoy as many as possible of the rational pleasures of life, and to earn an honorable and competent livelihood for themselves and for those who may be dependent on them. In the education of both the blind and the deaf difficulties are encountered such as the teachers of other children know nothing of, yet the results attained in these Institutions are approximately equal to those in the common schools, a fact that speaks eloquently of the patience and skill of the teachers who have devoted themselves to their work. The blind are generally admitted to the Institution at an earlier age than the deaf, and for a sufficient reason. The latter was familiar with the forms and visual characteristics of all the objects with which they are acquainted, but have absolutely no knowledge of language, so that the first educational process consists of language work. The blind, on the contrary, have, by natural processes, acquired considerable facility in the use of language, but are comparatively ignorant of the form and appearance of objects, their knowledge of which must be obtained by the sense of touch; and of course such instruction can be imparted and received at an earlier age than is feasible in the much more severe mental labor involved in attempting to master the intricacies and mysteries and innumerable complications and inconsistencies which characterize the orthography and idiomatic construction of this very expressive and efficient, but very illogical language of ours.

While the results of the educational training in both of these Institutions are equally surprising and satisfactory, and the ulterior purposes similar, yet it will readily be perceived that the methods employed must greatly differ. The deaf must receive all their instruction through the medium of the eye, and when communicating with the general public, must do so chiefly in writing. The blind, on the other hand, must depend on the ear alone for literary form, and on the sense of touch for their knowledge of the physical characteristics of objects, but they communicate with other people by the usual method of verbal speech. But for all losses nature grants some compensation, so that, though the blind and the deaf are deprived of one of their senses, the other senses become abnormally developed, and thus capable of rendering much more service than the same organs usually do for those who are blessed with all the senses. The eye of the deaf will catch and receive distinct impressions of motions so swift as to be separately indistinguishable to most other people. The ear of the blind, also, will detect sounds and shades of differences in voices and tones that few other people could distinguish, while their sense of touch is developed to a degree that is quite inconceivable to other people. In fact it is asserted that very often, when the finger tips of blind people have been dissected, a deposit of gray brain matter has been found there,

constituting a sort of nerve centre independent of the brain itself. Both the deaf and the blind, moreover, must depend on the memory to a much greater extent than hearing and seeing people do, so that in them this very important faculty becomes more highly developed than in other people of similar intellectual status. The blind, however, are more dependent on the memory than the deaf. Nearly all their instruction in all the literary and scientific branches is imparted orally and must be retained without the important aid of visual impressions, while their ability, by the aid of memory alone, to work out complicated arithmetical problems is simply marvellous, and strikingly illustrates the degree of development which the various faculties of the human mind are capable of under persistent and intelligent training in accordance with accepted psychological principles.

To give a clear idea of the specific methods of class instruction employed for the blind would be a difficult task. To be fully understood and appreciated they must be seen. Of course such subjects as history, literature, etc., are taught orally to a large extent, and the degree of proficiency attained is very creditable indeed. In teaching geography, wooden maps, made in the Institution, are used. Each one is about the size of an ordinary kitchen table, the outside edge of the map forming the outline of the country represented. Lakes and other bodies of water are indicated by sunken spaces proportionate to their size, rivers by groves, mountains by brass nails with pyramidal-shaped heads, and the names of places by small tacks. The outline of each separate country or section of country is cut through the wood into a separate block, and these are all fitted together like the puzzle blocks of which children are so fond. The map is laid on a table and the pupil takes his position at the south side of it, and by feeling the outline he is able to give the name of the country represented, and the positions of the various rivers, lakes, cities, etc., therein. If a block be removed and given to the pupil, the country or state or county represented will be named, and its chief characteristics described. In this way the pupils obtain a familiarity with the various countries, and more especially with this Province, which would put to shame many pupils in our public schools. This is no doubt partly due to the very great superiority of relief maps such as these over the ordinary flat surface school maps, which convey a very inadequate idea of the contour and physical features of a country; and it would undoubtedly be a good thing if all schools had a full supply of similar maps.

There are two methods of writing in use for the blind. Pupils are taught to write the ordinary script, which is done by the aid of grooved cards. But for transcribing both letter-press and music for their own

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