

Respect and develop their powers of affection, but do not let them grow sentimental. Never teach them anything they will not use in after life. Develop anything that will help in the slightest degree to make them useful in the home, in the community, or as wage-earners, however humble the work.

Never lose sight of any chance of vocational training of any kind. Of course, it is usually of a very simple and humble kind.

Try to get the training started at as early an age as possible. Has your pupil any younger brothers or sisters? Are they defective? Can they be given some training? The hopeful years are from three to thirteen. After that the progress is not so good. But all mentally defective children who come to school have some intelligence, and can learn something at school. It is probable that a special time-table ought to be made for your mentally defective child, but this will take time to develop. Perhaps we place too much emphasis on writing and reading. What use is writing going to be to your feeble-minded pupil? What will he do with it? It is likely that you will be able to teach him to write his name. That will be useful to him. Anyone who has taught a feeble-minded child the alphabet by means of giving him letters three or four inches high, cut out of wood, to handle and play with, will remember what a help these letters were. The phonic method is not always the best to use for such children. And do not try to give him all the lessons yourself. Your other pupils will often succeed in teaching him things that you cannot teach him. If there is a sign "For Sale" on a house near by, borrow it and use it to teach your boy these words. That lesson will lead to several others, and gradually the child may learn to read well enough to help himself and interest himself.

Of course the higher grade mental defectives or "morons", as they are called, or border-line cases, can learn to write or read easily. Readers of Dickens will remember Mr. Toots and his prowess as a letter writer. Mr. Toots got on quite well in Dr. Blimber's Academy. So will the Mr. Toots in your class—in a way. Writing from a copy—large round hand—is a favourite employment with many feeble-minded children. It does them no harm when they can do it fairly easily. They learn neatness and some control of hand and fingers. But in teaching reading and writing, do not use superhuman efforts to teach the child. It is sometimes agony to him and always exhausting to you, and no good comes out of it. Teach him what he can learn.

We may almost say, as a rule, that a child who is fairly good in arithmetic is not mentally defective. Arithmetic is the greatest school difficulty that a feeble-minded child has to meet. Do not drill him for ever on tables. He may learn them by dint of repetition, but often he cannot use them and will, therefore, forget them. Long division is