

Educational Work in the Indian School.

INSTRUCTION is all very well, but sometimes misses its mark, especially when teaching a foreign race, whose language, idioms, ideas and entire associations are different from our own. One is apt to take so much for granted and to begin to build an elaborate superstructure with no enquiries as to the foundation. It is curious as well as interesting, to set a class of children to write "compositions" on any subject. They delight in it, take to it like ducks to water, have plenty of ideas, which are often very quaint, sometimes very beautiful, always exceedingly practical, but, even after years of teaching, shewing most curiously by their superficial knowledge of English that it is indeed a foreign language to them. Their own language, though most complex in moods, tenses and inflections of all kinds, is yet unwritten, and while they have sounds which we cannot represent with our English alphabet, yet some of our sounds seem perfectly bewildering to them, e. g., "d" and "t" or "b" and "p" are quite interchangeable and the difference is difficult for them to appreciate. Here are a few random sentences from their written work: "We climp on the big trees." "The lillies is in butts now." "The wather we have here is try or wet." "We make little bonds to put fishes in."

Writing compositions often educes very original ideas, and also shews the weak points in the mode of expressing these same ideas, the latter can be remedied and the former expanded and trained.

It is interesting to note how different ideas strike different child-

ren. What English child would naturally begin thus: "In summer time that the time to clean all the chimenys and we scrub all the floors." Practical, isn't it? Then comes this very estimable remark: "We like to make our houses look neat and clean."

A very small child gives this short but graphic account of our doings in winter: "In winter the taps get frosty and then we put hot water on it, then the water will run fast."

This child seems to shew a tender consideration for the feelings even of inanimate nature: "We get lots of ice and we eat it, it is very cold, but we put it in our cloaks."

Here are some odds and ends of descriptions of spring and summer: "In spring the cows likes eating grass, the things get ripe, the birds, bees and snakes come, the bees go in the foxgloves and we take them and but them to our ears and listen to them singing." "When we have rain the grass grows thin and long, and they bend down when it rains, and the flowers bend down too." "In spring the little flies come out of their houses." "The little Aunts eat straw-perries and black-perries."

English verbs are a great puzzle, especially such things as "being" and "been." One child tries a combination which ought surely to have pleased and satisfied the most hard-hearted teacher: "It has bee-ing raining hard up here."

One word about our summer occupation in B. C., which one very small child gives as: "We eat bishops, and it tase bitter, sometimes we swallow them." This does not refer (as English friends might think) to our colonial way of settling church difficulties, but