

A DAY IN THE ONTARIO INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.*

A STUDY OF PRESENT-DAY METHODS.

Not long ago I spent a few profitable and pleasant hours in the Ontario Institution for the Blind. Such a visit as mine has a twofold result, it educates and undeceives. It is astonishing what crude notions otherwise well-educated people have of an institution of this kind, both with regard to its objects and its results. In a brief account of a hurried visit no adequate conception can be formed of the full scope and importance of the work done in such an institution, but still enough may be gained to open the mental eye and set the blind thinking.

The institutions for the blind here, and elsewhere in Christendom, are the results of what is termed the gospel of humanity. Only recently I read with considerable interest a detailed and graphic account of excavations among the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and, while these revealed a culture and a civilization equal, if not superior, to our own, the archæologists failed to discover an hospital, or indeed an institution of any kind whose mission was to ameliorate the sufferings of the afflicted and the helpless, or to protect the widow and orphan. Our communal, provincial or national systems for helping the helpless are the result of our common Christianity; and just in proportion as Christian influences abound in any country, so likewise shelters and aids exist for those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

The advantages of the site of the Ontario Institution for the Blind are apparent to the most cursory observer. From a sanitary point of view, nothing could be more admirably suited. It sits well up on the brow of a hill, while the soil is specially dry and well adapted to the sanitary needs of the institution.

The main building is about three hundred feet in length, with an extension containing the pupils' dining-room, domestic quarters, kitchens, bakery and store-room, etc. The division into small classes, the diversity of educational and instructional work, literary, musical, and industrial rooms for working, for study and practice, all absorb a space out of proportion to the mere numbers. With the present resident staff and appliances the building barely accommodates 140 pupils in the proportion of eighty boys to sixty girls, and from 130 to 140 is the average attendance.

In 1881 the present principal, Mr. A. H. Dymond, was appointed. The choice of Principal Dymond was a peculiarly happy one, as

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