

Teaching the Deaf to Speak.

As a general rule, far less interest is aroused and less sympathy felt, for the deaf than for the blind, and one reason of this is probably that deafness is so much less noticeable than blindness. And yet it is probably even worse to be born deaf than blind, for the child born deaf is shut out for many years from all but very limited communication with those around him, while the blind child can hear and talk and is, therefore, not so "out of it" as the deaf child.

Then, too, people have such erroneous ideas about the deaf; they think that they are mentally deficient, passionate, morose, difficult to manage, and depressing to teach; but this is

lips assume different shapes, and your tongue takes up different positions as you pronounce different words. The deaf child is trained to watch and imitate these movements, and so to understand the speech of others and to speak himself. He first learns the sounds that go to make up words, and then combines them to form words, at the same time learning the meanings of the words. From this simple beginning, language is very gradually built up; it is a much slower process than with the hearing, for while the hearing child is always hearing, and, therefore, always learning, speech, the deaf child only learns when consciously watching people's mouths; and the meaning and use of every word has to be carefully taught. As the vocabulary increases, ordinary



Teaching the Deaf at the Training College, Ealing.

not the case. They vary in mental capacity, and in disposition, in the same degree as the hearing do, and a school for the deaf is by no means the depressing place many imagine it to be.

The deaf are often spoken of as deaf and dumb, but they are as capable of speech as other children, the reason that they do not acquire speech in the ordinary way being that they do not hear it. Hearing children have to learn to speak. They learn by imitating the speech of those around them, they learn quickly and easily and without conscious effort. The deaf cannot hear any speech, and therefore remain without speech until they are taught in a special way. This way is called the oral system. If you look at yourself in a mirror while speaking, you will see that your

school subjects are taught, and, given sufficient time, there need be no limit to the education of a deaf pupil. He can learn all that can be learnt by the hearing, except, of course, anything that requires the appreciation of sound.

The work of teaching the deaf is most interesting and absorbing; the children are anxious to learn, for it means to them the opening up of a means of communication with others; they look up to and love their teachers, and the teachers feel that they are doing for their pupils what no others can do. It is truly a missionary work also, for it is the teacher who has the opportunity of training the child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

To turn to quite another view of the work. It is a good opening for educated women,

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