The Frederick Case.

The Christian Scientist question has been very prominently before the public recently in connection with the death of Mr. Frederick, an author and writer of some repute, on whom an inquest was held.

Christian Scientism has been negatively described as being neither Christian nor scientific; positively it is perhaps the finest example of irrationality that has ever obtained a widely accepted credence. The fact that it is credited to have obtained acceptance by 200,000 persons in America, comprising many of the so-called educated classes, is a source of astonishment, but gives also reason for thought.

Education is such a widely misapplied term. Persons who have learned certain subjects—Latin and Greek, for example—are generally termed educated; but it often happens that this degree of learning is little more than an exercise of the memory; the judgment and reason having been either dwarfed or left quite uncultivated. The want of observation and judgment in the mere bookworm has long offered a subject of amusing ridicule to the novelist and dramatist, and the lack of these is certainly the basis of the acceptance of such a farrago of nonsense as Christian Scientism by these "educated" classes.

Persecution or prosecution of the professors of this craze is to be deprecated, as only giving the advertisement they desire. Left strictly alone, these monstrous mushroom growths decay as speedily as they spring up; and although sympathy must be felt for their victims, this is considerably soothed by the reflection that they are of a class who, in any event, would probably not have aided greatly the progress of human development.

Over-burdened Children in Germany.

Under the above title lately appeared in a Manchester contemporary a very interesting account, by an English lady, of a holiday visit to Herr Trüper's educational institution for backward and mentally defective children at Sophienhöhe, near Jena. Here is the home of between thirty and forty boys and girls who are "not as other children are," mostly of the higher social

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.45.188.130-a Published online by Cambridge University Press

class, for the average payment (we have heard) is not far from £100 per annum. Herr Trüper and his wife personally superintend the establishment, which has a staff of three trained male teachers, four female teachers, two nursing sisters, a gardener, and a joiner, besides domestic servants. The daily routine is as follows :—Rise at 6 a.m., first breakfast at 6.30, lessons (none more than forty-five minutes, with intervals for play), 7.15 to 9 ; 9 to 10, recreation and second breakfast ; 10 to 1, lessons ; dinner, 1.15. After dinner, rest or recreation ; and in the afternoon lighter tasks such as singing and drilling. It is stated that in every case the lessons, rest, and play are carefully arranged with a view to the physical and mental capacity of the child ; but we would venture to remark that such a time-table as that above set forth would be beyond the endurance of the British feeble-minded child, however well adapted to his German congener. We are not informed what proportion of time is given in the daily instruction to manual and mental work respectively ; but four and three quarter hours of school before dinner, however varied, seems to us a case of "*Nimia diligentia magistri.*" The time-tables of our own training institutions for mentally feeble children of a similar class to those received by Herr Trüper show but from two to three hours' school-work in the morning, and—what we miss in the German plan—a distinct interval for active physical exercise, such as a smart walk or game of cricket, before dinner ; while the couple of hours in the afternoon are usually devoted to manual training, music, and other matters not calling for much mental exertion. We fear, indeed, that such a curriculum as Herr Trüper's would tend to aggravate rather than relieve the "over-burdened" condition of the backward British child.

The writer of the article is evidently not completely informed as to all that has been done of recent years in this country for the education and training of mentally feeble and other exceptional children. In addition to the old-established institutions for idiots and imbeciles, there have sprung up of recent years several educational homes for children incapacitated by mental or physical infirmity for ordinary school life, most of them under medical direction, but not (as stated in the article) "all very expensive" as compared with Herr Trüper's. The National Society for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded seeks to supplement the "special classes" established

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by several of the school boards of England by supplying residential accommodation and training in useful industry after school age in the case of children of poor parents, while there are some half-dozen that receive similar pupils of a higher social class at various rates of payment. One advantage that these latter have over Herr Trüper's establishment is that as a rule they do not receive pupils of so wide a range of incapacity as he does ; and there is no doubt that the higher grades of feeble-minded children are better dealt with if entirely separated from those properly designated *imbecile*. Herr Trüper's work in carrying on a "help-school for the higher schools" meets an undoubted social want ; and we are glad to know that the scientific as well as the practical aspects of the subject occupy his attention.

Juvenile Criminals.

The Commissioners of Prisons for England and Wales in their last report comment upon the very slight improvement in the educational status of the criminal classes since the passing of the Education Act, and attribute this greatly to the fact that one eighth of the child population of the country do not appear on the books of any elementary schools. There can be little doubt that this results from the lax administration of the law by the magistrates, and the inherent difficulties of dealing with those most in need of school discipline. A hasty judgment attributes the outrages of Hooligans to the inadequacy of education as a reforming force, and recalls the magnificence of the promises of improvement as compared with the poverty of performance. It is true that the school boards have been captured by the faddists and the incompetent in too many instances, that the thorough teaching of elementary knowledge has been sacrificed to unnecessary extras, that education in the wider sense, as affecting the conduct of life in the light of modern science, is almost everywhere an unknown quantity ; yet it is to educational institutions that we must look for the desiderated improvement in the less favourably placed classes of society. It is sufficiently discouraging for those children who pass from the comfortably equipped school-house to a squalid and deteriorating environment, but these at least are

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.45.188.130-a Published online by Cambridge University Press