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**PRIMROSE
HAIR DRESSING**



Left: The children thread beads to make their finger tips sensitive. Right: A girl at work with a Braille writing machine



They See With Their Hands (Concluded)

THIRTY children in the school at the Blind Institute in Auckland include a number in infant classes and a few preparing for University entrance. Their earliest training is calculated to make their finger-tips sensitive so that they may become adept readers

in Braille. They thread minute beads on fine wire, bending the wire to the shape of a chair or a sofa or a motor car or a cottage, weaving the flat surfaces of the articles in a regular diamond pattern. When I visited the Blind Institute I watched those small and nimble fingers

delicately threading coloured beads; a little Maori girl and a little Maori boy, their heads sometimes bent over the work and sometimes raised sky-wards, quickly turned corners to make a box or a chair with no help from the teacher. Another little girl was learning her first steps in Braille, the standard six dots (arranged in the manner of the six spots on dominoes) raised plain and big in metal brad heads on wooden blocks, and combinations of those six dots arranged to spell to her fingers the more simple familiar words of her world. I learnt to connect the shape of the printed letters c-a-t with my beloved and long-suffering Tibby, and this little girl was learning to connect a sound and a feeling, the sound of a word in her ear with the feeling of an arrangement of raised dots under her fingers. She did not look unhappy, and she did not look daunted; but I was saddened to think how much, enough and so much to spare, we have of sight that we cannot share or give away to these in such great need.

* * *

A little girl came into the room, very pink in the face.

"Well, Judy, what have you been up to?" the teacher asked. But Judy said nothing, remained very pink, and threaded beads at a great rate. The pinkness was the teacher's signal of mischief (which turned out to be a hidden handkerchief) and a sign that investigations must be made. It might have been unreasonable, but I found this one of the many things that made me feel cheered about the children in the Blind Institute. Good for Judy (pink in the face if you like) who had the spunk to concoct a mischief.

Beyond the bead stage, the children with now sensitive finger tips read books in Braille, learn touch-typing—and that is *real* touch-typing, no occasional peep to make sure of n or m, i or o—take dictation on the Braille machine or prick the Braille signs, by hand, through the sliding frame which has slotted holes to guide the pricker to make evenly-spaced combinations of dots. From the rows of Braille they have pricked out, the pupils then transcribe on to the typewriter in typing that would not disgrace a graduate of a commercial school. Indeed I saw some little girls typing rows of words such as *trails, silhouette, brilliant* and *anxious* without a mistake except for an occasional extra space. A boy of fourteen or fifteen took dictation on a Braille machine faster than I could take it in longhand and faster than the average typist could take it on the typewriter. This machine works on much the same principle as a typewriter, having levers for the various combinations of letters and syllables. But as in shorthand grammalogues shorten whole phrases to one combination of dots.

School inspectors visit these pupils; I saw the last report and was not surprised to find that the inspector was as impressed as I was with the work in the school and with the general atmosphere of cheerful industry.

* * *

After school hours the children play in the sun, listen to music or have music lessons, read their Braille story books or magazines, or take part in Girl Guide or Scout activities. In a gymnasium eight girls in Guide uniform were dancing and singing under the direction of a teacher. There was a dim light in the gymnasium but, apart from the warmth, it seemed to make no difference to them whether they danced in that dimness or out on the sunny lawn. They did later

(continued on next page)

THE SAD CASE OF MISS X



Miss X came to buy a Berlei. The shop had nothing in stock for her figure type, but the new girl behind the counter was anxious to please, and showed her the next nearest fitting, and Miss X, in desperation, bought it. She never felt happy in that Berlei. She blamed the store, and Berlei, but actually she knew herself that it was not her fitting.

* * *

This sad story is too often enacted nowadays. Its moral is, don't ever buy a Berlei that's the nearest to your own figure type fitting. Better to wait, or at a pinch, better to shop elsewhere. Your own store would much prefer you to do this, rather than sell you a Berlei that can never be completely satisfactory.

Please remember there are plenty of Berleis for everyone, and today, with the restrictions on the use of elastic, it's vitally important you get the Berlei that's exactly right for you.



Remember these points when being fitted:

- 1 Be sure you try sitting in the garment.
- 2 Be sure you ask for a little more room at the waist.
- 3 Be sure you bend and stretch in the garment to test it for freedom of movement.

