

demanded of a 13-year-old, but whose reading and spelling was not as good as that of the average seven-year-old. By using specially graded material and employing a tracing-writing method of learning to read, he caught up nearly three years of reading ability in six months. And with it was a distinct change in attitude—he became confident, co-operative and happy.

One development which has helped the handicapped child immensely has been the establishment of Child Guidance Clinics. At the Child Guidance Clinic three sets of specialists pool their knowledge to help handicapped or mal-adjusted children. There is a psychiatrist, a doctor specially qualified in psychological problems, such as the reasons for certain kinds of peculiar behaviour, such as dislike of certain people, an irrational fear of, say, ink or paint, an extreme unwillingness to be away from mother, or persistent lying. There is a psychologist, specially qualified in educational problems, in giving intelligence tests and in finding out why a pupil is failing in his work by giving tests and using errors as symptoms just as a doctor does. Then there is the psychiatric social worker specially qualified in finding out what effect the parents' attitude or the home conditions has on the child's difficulties. These specialists work as a team for the benefit of each pupil who finds it difficult to adjust himself to school life. Each year all over Britain many thousands of children, some dull, some delinquent, some neurotic and almost all of them backward, are helped towards better mental health.

But there are far from enough Child Guidance Clinics, mainly due to an extreme shortage of these three sorts of specialists, psychiatrists, psychologists and psychiatric social workers. Recently at the University of Birmingham, in conjunction with the Medical School, we have opened a University Remedial Education Centre. This, the first of its kind in England, combines the function of a Child Guidance Clinic and a training centre for psychologists and teachers of handicapped pupils.

During the past decade we have found that over 60 per cent of juvenile delinquents—the peak age for whom is 13 years—are either unable to read or are very backward in reading and writing. This is significant, for children or young people who cannot read often look for compensation in other ways. Yet apart from very low mental defectives, there is not one child in 20,000 who cannot be taught to read. A systematic and scientific attack on backwardness and maladjustment means an attack on later unhappiness, delinquency and mental illness. All these children will one day become citizens and most will become parents and employees (and while it is a good thing to find new citizens for a country, it is a better thing to see that every potential citizen has a full chance of realising his powers and becoming a happy, adjusted, and useful individual, for on satisfied and effective citizens, the working of a full democracy depends).

BLACKBALL SCHOOL REUNION OCTOBER 26, 27, 28, 29, 1951

Ex-Pupils and Ex-Teachers of the above School are requested to forward names, addresses and school years to the undersigned:

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