

METHODS.

A very few of the teachers still appear to think that they can do better by adhering to the methods that were in vogue forty years ago: that it is less difficult to teach children one at a time than to deal with ten or twenty simultaneously. A few also do very little teaching, but confine themselves to examining and overlooking. It is not that they are unwilling to teach, quite the contrary; they, indeed, work harder than those who use the much more powerful collective methods, and understand how much may be done with a blackboard and a piece of chalk. The principal defect noted in the teaching of those who have adopted the better methods are the following: (a) If a pupil makes a mistake the teacher corrects it, but sometimes does not make sure that the child has grasped the meaning of the correction, and is not likely to make the same mistake again. (b) The mistake made by the child is not taken as an indication of probable weakness on the same point throughout the whole class, and the teacher does not endeavour to make all the children profit by the correction of the mistake made by one. (c) In questioning a class the teacher asks only the more intelligent pupils to answer, and does not take pains to make the more backward ones understand the question and assimilate the answer. (d) Questions are too often independent one of another: they are good enough perhaps in themselves, but they do not lead up to anything. Teachers should remember that a satisfactory answer should generally be the basis of another question. (e) There is often good ground for inferring that lessons are purposeless; that is, that the teacher has not prepared or thought over his lessons beforehand, and said to himself, "I will make these children understand this or that new thing to-day;" or, "I will endeavour to consolidate the knowledge of the children about this or that matter." (f) Sufficient attention is not always given to the correction of mistakes made in written exercise, and still less to the prevention of the recurrence of such mistakes. (g) Children are sometimes left to puzzle out for themselves problems, pieces of composition, &c., for which they have been only imperfectly prepared. (h) After a lesson has been well and carefully given, up to a certain point, there is no recapitulation to fix the lesson as a whole in the children's memory. On the whole, however, I have to report satisfactory improvement in the methods employed in the schools.

INSTRUCTION.

Table No. 3 in the Appendix shows the examination results of the instruction given in the Native schools during the year. The results for 1882 as compared with those of 1881 are as follows:—

	1881.	1882.
Number of children examined	1,489	1,625
Passed Standard I.	241	263
Passed Standard II.	161	146
Passed Standard III.	65	81
Passed Standard IV.	25	29
Total passes	492	519
Number of children that did not pass	997	1,106

A few remarks may be made about the results obtained in each subject:—

Reading.—In many schools this subject is well taught; there is, generally, great improvement in the pronunciation; comprehension of what is read nearly everywhere receives satisfactory attention, with pleasing results. Pukepoto and Kaitaia excel in this part of the work. In some instances the teachers still seem to think that children must be taught a sort of jargon before they begin to read English. This is a very great mistake; it is much easier to teach children to read properly from the very beginning than it is to let them whine or drone on in a painfully monotonous way, and then afterwards to seek to free them from a habit that they have taken considerable trouble to acquire. Spelling is very often imperfectly taught; at the examinations it is found that children can spell words that they have learnt, but are quite unable to deal with new ones. It seems to me that Maori children should be carefully taught the powers of letters, and that for some considerable time they should spell only words that are phonetically represented by the letters that compose them. If this plan is adopted the children soon acquire the power of spelling any regular English word whether they have learnt it or not. Besides, this may be made extremely useful in enabling them to master pronunciation. Irregular words can be learnt afterwards in the usual way. Few teachers can be induced to give this method a fair trial; those who have done so are much pleased and surprised at the results obtained.

Writing.—There is still room for very great improvement in this subject; Maoris can so easily be taught to write well that anything short of good writing in a Native school must be regarded as unsatisfactory. If Maori children are left to their own devices of course they get into the way of scribbling just as other children do; but, with a moderate amount of careful instruction, Maoris can be got to write admirably. The writing is very good indeed at Peria, Otago Heads, Waikawa, (Maoris), Kaitaia, and many other schools.

English.—The progress made in this subject has been considerable; the children now generally understand the ordinary inflections and use plurals, pronominal distinctions, tenses of verbs, &c., properly. These matters used in the majority of schools to be considered as of no moment. If children could use English words and the Maori idiom together all was well. I think that more improvement has been effected in the teaching of this subject by the introduction of the standards than of any other. Kaitaia School is remarkable amongst the northern schools for excellence in English.