

extremely useful, as showing how the ownership of various parts of Europe has changed from time to time.

OTHER SUBJECTS.—Singing.—Apart from its merit as an accomplishment, singing has such a decided value in school work that the word “impossible” should not be lightly applied to the introduction of it. In the infant class especially it affords an effective instrument of relaxation and refreshment after a trying lesson. I hope to see it more generally introduced this year.

Drawing.—Drawing in the upper classes has received attention in most of the schools, and with satisfactory results. Two schools, Kynnersley and Paroa, omitted the drawing prescribed for Standard I.; but as in the first case it was so clearly a mistake, and in the other it arose from obvious want of desk room, I did not feel called upon to inflict the stern sentence of failure.

Repetition and Recitation.—Judged by the diligence exhibited in learning the pieces, the verdict would be “Good:” but for a few decided exceptions the recitation may be considered decidedly poor. A great degree of elocutionary power is hardly necessary to teach children to recite poetry with some expression. It is very trying to listen to children racing through their poetry regardless of stops or of notes of interrogation, &c. This could hardly happen if pains were taken to make the scholars understand and feel what they are learning.

Drill.—This is not neglected, though it reaches in only a few schools beyond the most elementary movements. The teacher at Cobden School has discovered the value of musical drill, the children marching to the sound of the flute. In most schools the marching in and out of school is carefully and quietly performed. I should like to see the custom, observed in some schools, of saluting the teacher on entering and leaving the schoolroom become more general.

Needlework.—Feeling that good work should receive credit from competent judges, I requested two ladies in Greymouth, Mrs. Nancarrow and Mrs. Robinson, to oblige me by examining and reporting upon the sewing. Their report is generally very favourable, the average of the work being decidedly good, and in the case of the Nelson Creek School most excellent.

Object Lessons.—Some few teachers have done fairly good work in this subject by means of Oliver and Boyd’s boxes of materials; but the schools are generally very poorly furnished with material, and lessons consisting merely of descriptions may just as well be omitted. Cabinets of objects are now procurable at a moderate price, and, having been procured, would form the nucleus of a collection to be made by the scholars themselves. An excellent manual upon the subject by W. Taylor says: “Whenever the facts to be taught admit of easy demonstration by experiment, then experiments, and not verbal explanations, should be used. The simple facts that sealing-wax easily breaks, easily melts, will fasten up a letter securely, takes an impression, are facts that the good teacher imparts by actual experiment before the class. Experimental lessons cost labour in preparation, but it is labour readily repaid in enhanced interest and thorough teaching.” See also Hassell’s “Object Lessons” for description of simple experiments with india-rubber. There are plenty of simple experiments which would cost nothing beyond a little trouble in preparation, and which would give zest and enjoyment to the lesson.

CLASS P.—Considering the scarcity of apparatus necessary for the teaching of infant classes according to the most modern and approved systems, those who have charge of these classes in the larger schools must be congratulated upon their condition. Teachers having charge of small schools find some difficulty in so arranging matters as to prevent the younger classes being sometimes an element of disturbance. Possibly means could be devised whereby some of the elder scholars could accordingly act as monitors. I do not say that it is an impossibility, but under these conditions it is only a teacher clever in devices who can secure a thoroughly satisfactory appearance of all those under his charge on examination day. In one or two cases I have noticed that no longer period of recess is given to this class than to the upper classes. This is a decided mistake, detrimental to the children, and calculated to add to the teacher’s trouble. The appointment to the Greymouth School of a thoroughly-qualified head mistress, who possesses a knowledge of the kindergarten system, will most probably have a beneficial effect upon that school, and ultimately, it is to be hoped, upon other schools.

TIME TABLES.—Considering the varying circumstances to be found affecting each school, I have not attempted any direct interference in the matter of time tables excepting in cases of giving too much time to one subject. I have in several cases suggested alterations which appeared to me desirable, and have always found the teachers ready and willing to accept a useful hint. Printed forms have been prepared, which, while securing uniformity of size and appearance, leave the teacher full liberty of arrangement. Preparing a time-table is perhaps one of the most difficult duties appertaining to school work, and one without some defect is not easily found, especially where one teacher has to distribute his efforts over the whole programme.

DISCIPLINE.—There is little to be said upon this subject. It is very seldom that at a country school I have had to remonstrate with the scholars for any kind of misbehaviour; and their manners are generally good. The rule existing is generally mild, the teachers having evidently learned by experience that personal influence is more potent than too ready recourse to the cane. It may be set against the numerous disadvantages of the teacher of a small school that the pupils, being always under his immediate supervision, are more within the reach of that personal influence before referred to. But, however more difficult it may be to maintain discipline in a large school, with many subdivisions, there is the most decided necessity for its existence; for without it satisfactory work cannot be done. I am not an advocate for a dead level of absolute quietude in the schoolroom—there are periods when, if the interest of the children is awakened, it must have some outward manifestation; but too much laxity tends to prevent that respect for the place which is a factor in school work. To pupil-teachers, and young teachers generally, I would say, Do not make the mistake of considering yourselves merely instruments in the teaching of so much reading, writing, &c. The blackboard is an extremely useful instrument in school work; but it is not sympathetic, which you must be if you desire to become good teachers.