

complain that his son was not learning opera and other things. "I have not taught him these things," answered the teacher; "but I have taught him music! Your son can now play anything." So it is with reading. It seems to me little short of idiotic to insist on pupils "going through" (as it is well called) a book in a certain space of time in school, when their doing so destroys their chance of learning to read. They might be encouraged to read these books at home; and at times at school fairly long portions might be read; but everything should be subservient to the teaching of reading. We want music, not opera; reading, not reading-books. Much harm is done by foolish talk about fluent reading. "Fluency," when turned into the vernacular, means "gabble." I find a pernicious practice in some schools of putting pupils from the third reading-book into the fifth. This is done for the purpose of saving the teacher's time. The time that can be saved must be very small, and a grievous injury is inflicted on the pupils which no teacher has a right to inflict. I am sometimes told that an Inspector has advised this proceeding; I cannot believe it: an Inspector who would give such advice is not fit to be an Inspector.

Geography has suffered by the recent change, by which it is no longer a pass subject in the Fourth Standard. This has made many teachers consider the subject as of little account. Evil, too, has been wrought by putting off the teaching of physical geography to the Fifth Standard. If this latter change were not a serious matter it would be a ludicrous one enough to provoke inextinguishable laughter.

In nineteen cases out of twenty vigilance will produce good discipline. I have had to remind teachers before that "order is kept, not with the cane, not with the voice, but with the eye." It is only teachers who cannot exercise vigilance who question this. There is one thing that is destructive of discipline—inadequate corporal punishment. If a child is punished in a fashion that sends him away laughing a grievous injury is done to discipline. Children themselves see this. I once asked a little girl of my acquaintance how it was they were so badly behaved at her school. The answer came, quick as lightning, "He doesn't hit hard enough." I am aware that in this matter teachers are far less to blame than parents, whose foolish indulgence is raising up a plentiful crop of larrikins.

The arithmetic prescribed by the new standard regulations for Standards I. and II. is not by any means sufficiently attended to. It is the most important part of the arithmetic prescribed for these standards.

I notice that many a young teacher is apt to change for the worse. He begins in all humility; thinks he can never do well enough; he has now the spirit of the clerk in Chaucer: "Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach." While this spirit animates him he does well. After a time, "We have changed all that!" He becomes conceited; he does not want to learn now; he would rather lay down the law. And so he goes on from bad to worse. It may be safely said that when a man ceases to learn he should cease to teach.

I notice that in some schools where the teachers are somewhat illiterate there is a tendency to rely on arithmetic, and the parsing that consists in pointing out the parts of speech. You will find the latter process fairly well done, while the composition is defective and full of vulgarisms. In such a school, if there are any Standard V. pupils you will not find them present. Teachers who have to resort to these expedients should not be teachers.

A practice is creeping into the schools which I consider pernicious—that is, the giving of impositions. This generally takes the shape of the writing-out by the pupils of a word or words a great number of times. Now, the least evil of this is that it injures the handwriting. It injures the pupils' health by shortening their time for recreation. It annoys and irritates. In a late number of the *Australasian* is told the story of a girl who is thought to have put an end to herself because of the worry of these impositions. People are not alive enough to the cruelty of these "humane" punishments.

I regret to say that in many places parents are unwilling to pay for the books and stationery of their children. They think the books should be given to them for nothing. In other words, they want to be paid for sending their children to school. Many teachers have complained to me that they have suffered from this kind of thing, especially those that were too conscientious to allow their pupils to go without books, as I fear some teachers have done. Committees should arouse themselves to put a stop to these things.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD J. O'SULLIVAN, Inspector.

The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

2. MR. FIDLER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Auckland, 17th May, 1887.

In compliance with the terms of the Board's resolution of the 13th May, I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending the 31st December, 1886.

During last year I examined eighty-five schools, that is, all in the southern district, except the aided school, Taupo. I inspected sixty-one in special visits, besides six very small ones, which I inspected on the day of examination. The following is the summary of results for the southern district;—