

“too far” is not so easy to convey. To instil into such minds the precise value of a conjunction is more difficult still, but this is successfully done.

There was no over shyness on the part of the children. They appeared to take great delight in their work, and to be pleased to show visitors what they could do. Mr. Van Asch could not refrain from indulging in a little fun, even at the visitor's expense. He tried to persuade one boy that his father was present, and pointed to a member of the local Press whose paternal aspect is proverbial, and said, “There is your father.” If fatherliness of expression were sufficient the gentleman in question might have been embraced by the whole Institute, but the boy was not to be taken in, and persisted in a smiling but firm refusal to acknowledge any relationship. The incident, of course, was of practical value as showing that the teacher was understood, and that there was nothing parrot-like in the replies given. A little girl who had written some words on her slate was told to take it to Mr. Fisher. She repeated the name readily enough, but was in a difficulty as to the person. “Take it to the gentleman who is bald” said Mr. Van Asch, and the girl, with a bright look round, tripped off with the slate and handed it with an amused smile to Mr. Fisher amid a roar of laughter, in which no one joined more heartily than the Minister himself.

It will be asked, “Do the children learn to speak plainly?” To this the answer is that they can talk so as to be understood even by strangers, and in some cases the articulation is really very good. They have no idea of intonation, and so speak in one key, and there is a strange wistfulness about the sound of the voice that strikes the listener. Some learn to speak much more distinctly than others, and this apart from the relative amount of general intelligence. And the development of ideas is, of course, far more important even than the teaching to talk, although the public are apt to run away with the notion that the latter is the only object of the teacher's work. It may be added that the children were receiving a drawing-lesson from a Christchurch lady when the visitors arrived at the Institute, and they appeared to take great interest in it, and to be shaping well.

There are at present thirty-eight children in the Institute. They are evidently well looked after, and appeared the picture of health. The great drawback to the place is the inconvenience of the buildings, and the want of means of teaching the children industrial occupations. For the latter purpose it would be better to have the Institution nearer town, in proximity to the railway and workshops. There is no doubt, however, that an admirable work is being carried on in giving an intelligent interest in life to those who otherwise would be shut off from all higher enjoyments. It is, in fact, the liberation of an imprisoned spirit which but for such aid would be shut up and isolated more effectually than any captive confined within stone walls.

No. 3.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Christchurch, May, 1889.

I have the honour to forward the following report on the deaf-and-dumb asylum at Sumner.

The children now number forty. They have all enjoyed, throughout the year, excellent health, and all appear cheerful, contented, and happy. The institution is kept clean and in good order, and all the sanitary arrangements have been properly attended to. The children are making satisfactory progress in their ordinary education. In addition, the girls are taught to make and mend their dresses, to darn, knit stockings, and do other woollen-work. They are also practised in waiting at table, at ironing, and in keeping their bedrooms neat and tidy. They are also encouraged to be orderly and clean in their habits. The elder pupils are taught to draw from models; and one paints flowers from nature. The boys generally do some gardening, fencing, and other healthy outdoor work. When a permanent and well-organized establishment is built for deaf-mutes the Government will have to take into consideration the necessity for training the boys in industrial pursuits. I can, in conclusion, only again reiterate what I have on former occasions said: that the deaf-and-dumb asylum at Sumner is a credit to the colony and to those who have charge of it; and it is with perfect confidence that I can recommend the institution to all parents and guardians who have children requiring the training which it affords.

I have, &c.,

H. H. PRINS, Medical Officer.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

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