

mental energy now expended in the cricket and football field may well find another scarcely less attractive field of exercise.

In the workshop the schoolmaster who has received a proper training, and who in virtue of his profession understands the bearing of the manual exercises on general education, must in the end prove the most valuable kind of instructor, and probably a modification in the training of pupil-teachers and students will in a few years supply the requisite skill; but for the present dependence must be placed almost exclusively on the services of intelligent artisans. It is to the larger centres alone that we can look for such instructors, and in them alone will the number of pupils to be served justify the necessary initial expenditure. As a guide to the instructor an excellently graduated course of woodwork with scale-drawing instructions is available, and, although individuality in teachers and pupils is to be encouraged, this course may well be taken as the accepted standard.

While technical instruction is foreign to the purposes of the elementary school, and manual training in connection with elementary education is mainly to be valued as a means of mental discipline, there is one subject eminently suited to the elementary school, which is in one view technical, in another manual, the purpose of which, however, is wholly one of direct practical utility. We refer to cooking and kindred occupations of housewifery. The subject has indeed quite as much claim to be recognised as a subject of elementary instruction as reading and writing, and is equally necessary for at least one-half of the community. At any rate, to be able to cook a dinner fairly is much more important for our girls, as a preparation for the business of life, than the skilful manipulation of vulgar and decimal fractions, or a knowledge of the operations of the bill-discounter and the stock-broker. Practice in cooking is indeed only the corollary of the bookish instruction in "domestic economy" which already forms a part of the usual school course, in larger schools at least, and facilities for the practice should, in our view, form an essential feature of a school's equipment. We do not even think it necessary that practice of the kind should be taken outside the usual school-hours. Where practical lessons in the subject are regularly given—that is, lessons in which the pupils contribute a share of the work—we are inclined to believe that the Inspector might fairly be permitted to make some allowance in other respects. A Sixth Standard girl, for instance, might well be permitted to qualify for the Sixth Standard in arithmetic by doing again a Fifth Standard test, and in the Fifth Standard a similar concession might be made by accepting the half of the Fifth Standard work in the subject. Below the Fifth Standard it would not be profitable to go.

Again, in this respect the school of substantial size could alone expect to be fully provided with the means of carrying out the work as completely as is desirable; but even in outlying districts some attempt might be made with most imperfect appliances. We need not go very far out of our way to regard the gridiron and the saucepan as necessary parts of school furniture, and expect them to be made use of over the school-room fire as instruments of practical instruction.

We have, &c.,

L. B. WOOD, M.A.,
W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D.,
THOS. RITCHIE, B.A., } Inspectors.

The Chairman, Education Board, North Canterbury.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Timaru, 3rd March, 1897.

I have the honour to present my report on the schools in this district for the year 1896.

During the year sixty-five schools have been in operation, the same number as last year. The number of children on the rolls at the time of examination shows an increase of sixty-eight. There is a decrease of seventy-seven in the preparatory classes, and of forty-seven in Standard II., and the increase is distributed in a fairly proportionate manner among the other classes. The number of Roman Catholic schools remains the same. Two of these are in Timaru, boys and girls being taught in separate schools; and there is a mixed school for boys and girls in Waimate, and similar schools in Temuka and Kerrytown respectively. An improvement in methods and in results has to be recorded for the schools as a whole, and the manifest desire of the managers and teachers to do their utmost for the advancement of their schools gives promise of greater success in the future.

The following table shows the examination results of the Board's schools for the whole district:—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
				Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	114
Standard VI.	301	294	242	14 0
" V.	500	487	369	12 11
" IV.	727	697	505	12 1
" III.	797	778	641	10 11
" II.	675	657	636	9 10
" I.	667	657	650	8 8
Preparatory	1,510
Totals for 1896	5,291	3,570	3,043	11 5*
Totals for 1895	5,223	3,439	2,959	11 5*

* Mean of average age.