

The gross expenditure for the year ended 31st December, 1899, was £3,444 2s. 5d., made up as follows: Salary of Director and teachers, £1,339 2s. 1d.; steward, matron, and servants, £483; rent, 470; housekeeping, £778 17s.; travelling-expenses, £156 9s. 9d.; school material, £10 8s. 5d.; repairs and works, £55 3s. 11d.; clothing, £15 19s. 9d.; medical attendance and medicine, £44 2s. 8d.; water-supply, £21 19s. 6d.; sanitary precautions, £15 14s. 4d.; sundries, £53 5s. Less amount contributed by parents, £199 15s. Net expenditure, £3,244 7s. 5d. Cost of land and buildings purchased, £4,700; portion paid to 31st December, 1899, £2,700..

## No. 2.

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR.

SIR,

School for Deaf-mutes, 9th May, 1900.

I have the honour to report that owing to frequent irregularities in the pupils' attendance at school, due to illness and to a change in the teaching-staff, the educational harvest of 1899 was in a few of the classes less bountiful than in former years.

Within a short time from the re-opening of the school, the total number of pupils reached fifty; but, as one of these was for special reasons boarded-out in the neighbourhood, the number of boarders within the institution amounted to forty-nine. With the exception of this boarded-out pupil, who lost his hearing when seven years of age, all are deaf from birth or from very early infancy.

The proportion of absolutely deaf pupils to those with a vestige of hearing-power, enlarged upon in my report of 1893, has undergone but little change.

The area of the colony from which the pupils were drawn is also still as wide as ever. Seventeen pupils came from the Provincial District of Otago, eleven from Canterbury, three from Westland, two from Nelson, seven from Wellington, nine from Auckland, and one from Hawke's Bay.

It was impossible to immediately and judiciously fill the breach in the staff caused by the dismissal of the first-assistant at the beginning of 1899; for no properly-qualified teachers of the deaf on the articulation method are available in these colonies. Under these circumstances the vacancy was filled temporarily by Mr. Henry C. D. van Asch, one of the Director's sons, who from early youth has been familiar with the instruction and treatment of the deaf. The Director was thus enabled to devote part of his time to the initial training of Mr. T. F. Chambers, who has been appointed junior assistant-teacher in the school.

Undoubtedly the most laborious and difficult of all the classes was the articulation class, consisting of eight beginners, because it contained children of widely different capacity, and included one too backward and too old to be admitted otherwise than as an experiment. To handle this uneven batch of raw recruits was a task that required unlimited patience, considerable physical exertion and experience, and great assiduity. Nevertheless, by the end of the year the entire course of graduated exercises in speech, lip-reading, reading and writing, as laid down by the regulations, was passed through with the slow-minded, and much more in the way of sentence-forming with the quicker children, and a word of commendation is due to the assistant-teacher in charge, the successful work proving, moreover, his right to the certificate of proficiency issued to him a few years ago.

The scene at the opposite end of the school presented a picture in decided contrast to all this. Here the pupils were only a few in number, and in their last year of study. They were equally bright intellectually, and almost of the same age. Instead of making a demand upon the physical endurance of the teacher, as in the articulation class, they often led the conversation of their own motion, and went through their school-work in a most cheerful frame of mind. They were so eager after knowledge of every kind that to instruct them in social, historical, political, and commercial topics, as was done, was a comparatively easy and rapid process, and to interchange ideas with them in and out of school hours, and on many questions of the day, was much more of a peculiar charm than of an irksome toil.

Immediately below this advanced class, there was another of eight pupils, not quite so even in mental powers, but fairly intelligent, and equally ready with their eyes to catch up from their teacher's mouth and face all manner of words and expressions when clearly enunciated before them. The Director selected this class as probably the most suitable to give the newly-appointed assistant-teacher a few introductory lessons in the characteristic mode of dealing with deaf-mutes. In order to assist parents also in explaining difficulties, I shall, by way of an illustration, state how one of these difficulties was overcome while the class was reading the slightly altered story entitled "One good brick is worth many poor ones," Southern Cross Readers, No. 1, page 29. Story: "A cat one day met a fox in the wood. Puss knew that the fox is cunning and that he knows a good deal of the ways of the world; so she thought she would speak to him. 'Good-day, Mr. Fox,' she said," &c. Sentence one presented no difficulties. But, after the second sentence had been carefully read aloud by a pupil, he at once halted to inquire the meaning of "the ways of the world"; and this is how the cloud of vagueness was dispersed.