

Q. Did you see the fowls outside?—A. Yes, sir. Q. Tell me what the fowls do?—A. Look at the ground, peck with their mouths. (Teacher: Beak). Q. Yes, the fowls look at the ground, and peck. What else have you seen the fowls do?—A. Look about (imitating a hen's peculiar way of looking sometimes). Q. What else? A. Jump on a branch. Q. What else? A. Scratch the soil. (To forcibly illustrate the peculiar way of a hen scratching, the teacher asked the pupil—always *viva voce*, be it understood—to step on the floor and to show him exactly how hens scratch and look for seed and bits of food.) Teacher: Yes, those ways of busily scratching the soil in search of food, of picking up seeds and bits, of looking inquisitively at people, of jumping on a branch or fence, are the habits, are the ways, of fowls. (To make the point clearer still): Q. Does a cow ever scratch the ground and look for food? A. (laughingly) No, Sir. Q. You understand, then, the ways of cows are not like the ways of fowls. Did you see Arthur K. (a small boy) at football yesterday? Did you see him waving his hand and looking angry when Mr. C. caught the football in front of him and kicked it? Very well, that was Arthur's way of showing disapproval. Do all little boys tell me at once, "admit," when they copy from another boy or when they lose a pencil? A. No, Sir. Teacher: Well, they are like people who do not "own" quickly ("admit readily") when they do wrong. Some people tell the truth at once; some people do not. Those are the ways of people. Those are the ways of the world. Now, the fox told the cat (claimed) that he knew much about people; so he said he knew much of the ways of the world.

This mode of treating this and similar difficulties may seem somewhat long, but conversation is a ready means of communication, and, provided the teacher is only able to choose his illustrations from the pupil's own sphere of knowledge, the process is really much shorter and much more interesting than would at first appear. One more example from a lower class, where a lesson on "The Day" was being read and discussed. The following passage was under consideration: "While it is light (day) people are busy (at work, active), but they rest (sleep) during the night—not during the whole night, but during the greater part of it." Knowing that the meaning of the sentence would not be clear to all the pupils, the test of cross-examination was again applied: Q. Is it light now?—A. Yes, sir. Q. Am I at work now?—A. Yes, sir. Q. How do you know?—A. Because you are teaching now. To E.: Cover my hand (putting his hand on the table). E. could not do it; so another pupil, F., covered the teacher's hand partly with hers. Teacher to P.: Cover the whole of my hand. P. did so; but as some of the finger-ends were still visible the teacher asked: Is the whole of my hand covered?—A. No. Then, taking a slate P. covered the hand completely. E. was now required to say: Percy could not cover the whole of your hand with his hand, but he covered the whole of your hand with a slate. The pupils were then given a piece of paper, and asked to cover it partly, to cover it wholly (entirely), to cover the smaller part of it, to cover the greater part of it, &c.

The health of the inmates was on the whole hardly satisfactory. Two boys fell seriously ill in March. One of them was removed home when convalescent, and in consequence of his attack did not return to the school. The schooling of seventeen other inmates was materially hindered owing to an outbreak of diphtheria. As no adequate provision exists in the institution for the careful treatment and nursing of sick children, all the cases as they occurred were, by the medical adviser's orders, sent to the Christchurch Hospital, where, thanks to the up-to-date treatment of the medical staff, and to good nursing, the patients quickly recovered.

My last and sorrowful duty in this report is to refer to the loss of the Rev. William James Habens, B.A., the late Inspector of this school. He was connected with the school from the very beginning, and watched its growth with a very deep and enlightened interest, so that no one in the colony had a clearer and fuller knowledge of its internal working. To him there seemed to be a kind of fascination about our work; and as it appeared to be his very nature to interest himself in individual cases, his memory and his name will long live in the minds of past and present pupils, and not least in that of your obedient servant,—

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

G. VAN ASCH.

No. 3.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 15th June, 1900.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Deaf-mute Institute at Sumner for the year 1899:—

The past year has seen the worst outbreak of illness in the history of the school. Diphtheria commenced in April with three cases, which were at once removed to the Christchurch Hospital, and were followed by ten in May, three in June, one in July, one in August, and four in September. The early cases were generally severe, but the later cases were very mild. There were also nine cases of tonsillitis, two of ulcerated throat, two of gastritis, two very severe cases of pleurisy and pleuro-pneumonia, and a number of minor cases due to the same cause. No deaths occurred, but fifteen cases were sent to the Hospital, and a considerable amount of antitoxin had to be used to arrest the endemic. The cause of the illness was quickly traced to the faulty construction of an improvised schoolroom, which was not part of the main building. It was originally a passage connecting two main buildings; and, owing to the increasing number of pupils, and the necessity for more schoolrooms, it had been enlarged and utilised as a temporary expedient. It covered some hollow ground, and, having no rain-shoots, the heavy rain in April filled the hollow under the floor with a great quantity of water. On taking up the floor a very bad smell was noticed, and, on