

and all media for this expression, each and all a means of deepening and strengthening the impressions already made. Thus far, however, the subject is touched only on one side, the side of mental training and discipline. The ethical side is no less important. But little reflection is needed to convince us that the capacity to love whatever is beautiful is an endowment with which every normally developed child enters life. In a majority of cases birds, trees, and flowers are probably the objects which beguile him into his first voluntary studies of nature, and in the field here offered there are endless opportunities to cultivate and develop tastes and habits which may prove a bulwark against temptation, and yield solace in the trials that await him in later years, which will enable him to find comfort and calm in

Those dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold.

In some parts of the colony there is at present a movement in the direction of bringing nature-study in its economic aspect into greater prominence among the subjects taught. We freely acknowledge the importance of agriculture as a national industry, and we do not ignore the close correlation existing among all branches of knowledge, but we do think that effort and time will be largely wasted in the attempt to superimpose upon the routine of the elementary school any technical agricultural instruction worthy of the name. The unity of nature is the aspect most prominent in early life, and an attempt to present it to young children as a series of thought-tight compartments will only result in their coming to regard the study as a set task. The immature brain will become a modified lumber-room for technicalities which on occasion may be repeated in a more or less parrot-like fashion, but which will find no permanent lodgment in the mind of the child who is the victim of a well-meant attempt. The primary school is not the place for technical instruction, nor have its senior pupils attained such an age as will enable them to specialise with profit. Its function is to bestow a general training and to cultivate such mental alertness as will enable its deserving pupils to proceed, if so desired, to the more advanced work of a secondary school, where a further course of two or three years may enable them to take up work on special technical lines at the age of sixteen or seventeen—the lowest limit approved by the best authorities. The nature-study lesson will, necessarily, to some extent take cognisance of the economic bearing of simple facts observable in plant and animal life. In this direction, and in the encouragement of cottage-gardening as its ancillary occupation, we are convinced the primary school will render most effective service.

**PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION AND DRILL.**—In practically all the schools of the district these subjects are receiving attention, and it is gratifying to find an increasing number of teachers who supplement the ordinary club, wand, and dumb-bell exercises with others in which at frequent and regular intervals practice in deep-breathing is given. The cadet movement has now found permanent acceptance in this as in other districts, and we are glad to note that Colonel Loveday has recorded his satisfaction with the efficiency of the various corps. Between this efficiency and the discipline of the schools the connection is very intimate indeed. The huge attendance at the yearly display given in Lancaster Park by the Public Schools Amateur Athletic Association is an excellent indication of the interest taken by the public in this department of training. The general attractiveness of the items in the day's programme, the precision which marks every movement, and the effectiveness of the massed displays speak eloquently of the time and pains which members of the various teaching-staffs (the ladies especially) have devoted to the preparation of their squads. The smoothness and punctuality apparent in the unbroken succession of events bear equally emphatic testimony to the forethought and organising capacity of the officials concerned.

**DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.**—In the district high schools, nine of which are now in operation, the only new development during the year has been the equipment of that at Christchurch West with a laboratory and workshop. These adjuncts were very necessary, but as they had not been provided at the date of our annual visit they cannot at present form the subject of further reference. In these schools as a whole sound work is being done with a substantial proportion of pupils, the majority of whom, however, are not pursuing their studies with a view to preparing for further examination. We think the steadying effect of working towards a definite end should not lightly be disregarded, but even so we recognise the value of the service rendered in prolonging the school career at a period when discipline is much needed, and in sending forth into the community a leavening element in which new interests and broader sympathies have been awakened, and the mental horizon has been correspondingly widened. From these and from other secondary schools recruits to the service have now begun to appear in the ranks of our pupil-teachers, and we hope to meet with further accessions from the same sources.

**GENERAL.**—Recent experience has impressed us with the necessity for defining our attitude towards some miscellaneous matters which have been regarded with indifference by a few teachers. Our estimate of the general efficiency of a school, and the mark assigned for order, tone, and discipline will be subject to modification, favourable or otherwise, by the care bestowed upon preparation of schemes of work, the attention given to progress examinations, the preservation of records, acquaintance with the syllabus and regulations generally, and the condition of school grounds, buildings, &c., so far as the teacher's responsibility therefor may reasonably extend. We are much pleased to notice the increasing number of school gardens, and are keenly alive to the far-reaching influences which a little effort in such direction may tend to cultivate.

We have, &c.,

W. J. ANDERSON, LL.D., THOMAS RITCHIE, B.A. T. S. FOSTER, M.A.	}	Inspectors.
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The Chairman, North Canterbury Education Board.