

these classes, however beneficial and inspiring to teachers, are poor substitutes at best for practical systematic training at university classes. The attainments of the students attending them are so diverse that no course, unless on the most elementary lines, can be suitable to all; the period of attendance is too short for the attainment of satisfactory knowledge and skill in the subjects taught, and the large size of the classes precludes the possibility of sufficient practical individual work. Still, situated as we are at present, it would be folly not to avail ourselves of the confessedly limited advantages conferred by these classes. We can only wait patiently but hopefully for the time when an improved system of training of teachers will be introduced which will render them no longer necessary.

And here it is fitting that we recognise the great benefit derived to the teachers of Southland from the course of lectures delivered during the winter months by Dr. Marshall, of Dunedin. The lectures, which dealt with the geology and physiography of Southland, were informative and stimulating; as a consequence the interest in them was lively and sustained. The results of Dr. Marshall's visit are already manifesting themselves in the work of not a few of our schools.

During the year considerable progress has been made in that branch of school activity known as manual work. Most teachers now recognise that manual work is not so much an additional subject as one by which other subjects are illustrated and exemplified. We therefore now rarely find it treated as completely isolated and detached; in most cases its correlation with other subjects is satisfactory. In almost all the infant departments some form of handwork—usually paper-folding or paper-cutting—is taken up, and work of a cognate kind is taken by pupils in the lower standard classes. But it is only in the Gore, East Gore, Invercargill, and suburban schools that the course has been so organized and developed as to lead from paper cutting and folding in the junior classes through plasticine and cardboard modelling to woodwork in the upper classes. The value of the training in woodwork that the pupils receive under Mr. Brownlie is undoubted, and evidence is furnished as to its educational work by the interest it stimulates, the inventiveness it engenders, as well as by the dexterity it cultivates.

In the case of the girls in the upper classes in the schools mentioned above, cookery takes the place of woodwork for boys. Under the capable direction of Mrs. Turner these girls study, in the school kitchen as an experimental laboratory, the laws of health so far as these relate to the preparation of food, and acquire an expertness in the art of cookery, and in at least some of the details of home-management, that cannot fail to make for the stability and happiness of family life. As in respect of woodwork, we greatly desire to see an extension of the opportunities now within reach of pupils for acquiring a knowledge of this indispensable branch of domestic science.

Twenty-two classes in elementary agriculture were in operation during the year, and in most of these fairly satisfactory work was accomplished. Both teachers and pupils evince an interest in the school gardens, and in some localities they receive the hearty sympathy and support of the parents. The instruction given in these classes will not make a pupil a farmer—it is not intended to do so—but if it succeeds, as undoubtedly it does succeed, in developing in him a love for the beautiful, and an intelligent interest in his environments; if it gives a practical direction to nature-study, and furnishes an elementary knowledge of agricultural processes by means of practical illustrations; if it cultivates a taste for rural occupations, and a bias towards country life, then the inclusion of elementary agriculture in our school curriculum is amply justified.

We are, &c.,

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The Chairman, Education Board, Southland.

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