

Buildings, &c.—Though there are notable exceptions, it is unfortunately still the case that the school buildings and grounds of the district are far from presenting an attractive appearance. The great majority of the buildings are of wood, requiring repair at fairly frequent intervals; these repairs, from want of watchfulness and lack of interest on the part of teachers and Committees, are too often deferred till serious expenditure has to be incurred in dealing with them. By the operations of various patriotic leagues the trashy “pictures” which used to decorate the interiors of our schoolrooms have been displaced in a good many instances by suitable engravings in decent frames, but in many cases much remains to be done to render schoolrooms homelike and attractive. The difficulty of obtaining caretakers is no doubt responsible for the dirt and discomfort characteristic of a good many schoolrooms in this district. In some places where this difficulty has been encountered the plan of co-operative cleaning by the elder pupils, when discreetly managed, has been very beneficial. In a climate like ours it is essential that playgrounds should be as well drained and gravelled as possible to enable games and physical exercises to be carried out in comfort and with efficiency. Gravel is plentiful in most parts, but the flatness of the country and the nature of the subsoil in many instances make drainage both difficult and expensive. In a number of cases the spread of gorse has occasioned considerable trouble; it is very difficult to sheet home the blame to the parties responsible. Plantations of trees and shrubs have been made pretty widely throughout the district, but more with the view of providing shelter than of ornamenting the grounds. It would be wrong to leave this subject without commenting adversely on the want of cleanliness in the outhouses. It is the exception rather than the rule to find the closets decently clean, while the urinals and the grounds in their vicinity are in a great many cases in an unsavoury condition. The question of finding the necessary labour again arises here, and this time in acute form, since in this case the work to be done is of a distinctly unpleasant nature. The conscience of the public and of the School Committees will require a rude awakening before vigorous steps are taken to cope with this evil.

We have, &c.,

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