

aids to teaching; ferns and other plants are growing in pots; specimens of insects, minerals, and raw articles of commerce are displayed on the mantelpiece and shelves. At another school, with precisely similar advantage, an appearance of apathy and discomfort prevails; the rooms are not properly swept and dusted; no attempt is made to enliven the appearance of the place; the maps, cards, &c., are not hung, or they are hung in a stiff and formal manner, with bad taste. Such as the teacher is, so will the school be, was the impression conveyed to our minds at these different kinds of schools. Sanson, and the infants' department in the new building at Palmerston, are good examples of the former kind of school, as also several of the small buildings in new settlements in the bush, such as Kairanga, Fitzherbert, Rata, and Birmingham. We are sure that those teachers who go to a little trouble and expense in beautifying the rooms in which they work find an ample reward in the improved taste, enlarged ideas, and more thorough intelligence of their pupils. Also, by this means teachers can do a great deal to promote amongst their children a feeling of loyalty and pride in the school, and consequently the attendance is improved.

Several Committees and teachers have done a good deal in the direction of improving the playgrounds in bush districts by clearing away the logs. Trees have been planted in some grounds; but this is a matter that might receive attention at more schools. Trees grow very quickly in this district, and, apart from their ornamental and economic purposes, they provide a pleasant shade for children during play-hours, as well as shelter from the frequent winds. If an "arbor day" were instituted it might be productive of much good, and lead the children to take a pleasure in the planting of trees and flowers. Then, also, the settlers might catch the infection, and something more would be done to replace the thousands of acres of forest that are annually burnt. In a few playgrounds the children have gardens, and they take the greatest pleasure in attending to them. This is a taste which we should like to see more generally cultivated. Broken gymnastic apparatus gives a very untidy appearance to some playgrounds. Some teachers might pay more attention to the playground life of their children. In the playground the teacher can see to what extent his lessons have been beneficial in forming the character and habits of those committed to his care.

ORGANIZATION AND METHODS.—We gave considerable attention to these during our inspection visits; much was done in the way of conferring with and giving advice to teachers regarding them, and more or less full reports were written for each school. In this report, under the heading "Instruction," some hints have been given with regard to methods of teaching certain subjects, but a few further remarks in that connection will not be out of place now.

As long as there are so many small schools, and as long as teachers have so few opportunities for self-improvement, there must be a great deal of poor and misdirected teaching. In a great many cases a teacher never sees a school but his own from year's end to year's end; and so one subject may continue to be taught well, and another badly. Some years ago it was recommended that teachers should obtain a day's leave now and then from their Committees and visit other schools. Several teachers with much benefit to themselves took advantage of the recommendation; some even went so far as to take their holidays at a different date from the majority of schools, so that they might spend considerable time in seeing the methods of other teachers, but not so many as might well have done so. That there is too much aimless, haphazard teaching was often made very plain to us. Many a teacher showed that he did not know what form his lesson was to take until he started to give it, whereas he should have drawn out beforehand written notes of the lesson. Lessons generally, we find, are not prepared and arranged so as to form part of a scheme which will give a complete and thorough knowledge of the subject.

Another fault we frequently had to point out was, there is too little *vivá voce* teaching, several teachers being quite content to keep their pupils employed at slate-work, while they themselves walk about and supervise. Owing to so little actual teaching being shown to the Inspector, it was often difficult for him to form the opinion which he is required by the department to express upon the merits of teachers. We are glad to see that teachers now more generally put their pupils standing in oral work. In this work simultaneous and indiscriminate answering require to be kept within bounds (this has invariably to be pointed out to newcomers).

That the blackboard is not made sufficient use of was very evident at many schools. Thus, to give one example of this neglect, in reading and spelling lessons to the lower standards we often noticed that, though the children were quite ignorant of certain words, the teacher did not write such words on the blackboard, whereas they should have been written thereon in syllables. In most oral lessons an abstract should be put on the blackboard as the lesson proceeds. Such abstracts show in black and white the information it is desired to impart; they are useful in the recapitulation that always should take place at the end of a lesson; and, when properly put down, they serve to train the pupils in nice arrangement of work. In *teaching*-lessons in arithmetic the blackboard should be very freely used, especially when introducing a class to a new rule, or when educating the various stages in a problem. Recapitulation is not sufficiently employed in the various oral lessons.

The inductive method of teaching should be more largely employed. Many teachers suppose that this method applies to object-lessons only; some do not practise it even in these. The teacher who merely tells his pupils what he should lead them to discover for themselves makes but a feeble impression on their minds. If education is to be a training of the faculties, if it is to prepare the pupil to teach himself, something more is needed than to pour in knowledge, as into a vessel, and make the pupil reproduce it. "The need for perpetual telling results from our own stupidity, not from our pupils'." That which is a mere routine of statement, question (on the statement made), and repetition cannot be called teaching. With a view to encourage the inductive method, questions bearing upon it have been set each year on the School Management examination-papers for pupil-teachers. Inquisitiveness in children should be encouraged. Very rarely is a child heard to ask a question while the lesson is proceeding.