

for good in the teacher's hands. For all these reasons we should hail with delight any alteration in the present scale of staff which would make it possible to ameliorate the hard lot of the infant-mistresses in such schools. In schools with but one teacher matters are still worse. Unless the teacher be specially gifted there is a danger of the younger children being to a large extent neglected, and thus acquiring habits of idleness and carelessness which will prove a perennial source of trouble in their later career. In the course of our visits to such schools in the incoming year we shall endeavour to mitigate the disabilities under which at present the younger children suffer. While on the subject of infant-classes, we should like to suggest that order and discipline are quite as essential in the infant-room as in the higher departments of the school, and that much yet remains to be done, by action-song, physical drill, and play, to brighten the long hours of the infants' school-day.

The practice of simultaneous oral repetition is, we are glad to say, falling into disrepute, though a good many teachers still seem to consider that the more noise is being produced the more progress is being made. The practice never had much to recommend it. It carries with it the semblance of vigorous work, seldom the reality. It interferes with ordinary school-work and consequently is sometimes conducted in draughty porches. It is highly inimical to natural expression in reading and recitation. It is a frequent source of injury, unless carefully managed, to the vocal organs of young people. For all these reasons simultaneous oral work ought, if retained at all, to be confined to the lowest classes and to be used with the utmost caution.

It seems strange to us that so many teachers should still regard the schoolroom as the only place in which education can be successfully carried on. It is odd to hear a teacher give a lesson on plateaux, and, on taking the class to the playground, to find that not one of them recognises the fact that the school stands on a plateau; or to see a teacher proceed to elucidate the nature of a river by means of blackboard sketches, while a notably complete example of his subject is no farther off than the playground. Neither in the case of nature study nor of geography can we find enough evidence of actual appeal to nature. Surely a ramble (with a purpose) once a week could be managed in the case of many country schools at least.

We have to suggest to our teachers the propriety of giving an opportunity for silent reading to such pupils as are likely to benefit by it. In all schools there are pupils who, by reason of liberal mental endowments, occasionally find time hang heavily on their hands. Why not remove from such pupils the temptation to idleness and mischief, and at the same time afford them an opportunity for self-improvement, by silent reading? Where there are good school libraries there should be no difficulty about suitable books; in other cases, spare magazines and papers might be requisitioned. This plan, it seems to us, would be an incentive to industry and self-reliance, and, in addition, would develop a taste for good reading which would persist after school days were over. All the pupils of the higher classes might well be engaged for a short time every week in the silent reading of an English classic fairly within the power of their comprehension and suitable as to subject-matter. An occasional short composition exercise would test the benefit derived in each case. One great advantage of some such plan as this would be that the pupils would feel in honour bound to show that the confidence their teachers had placed in them had not been undeserved.

It will be necessary before long to revise the list of school-books authorised by the Board for use in the district. The syllabus now in operation was launched with such suddenness that publishers found considerable difficulty in issuing school-books within reasonable time to meet its altered demands. Some of these books, prepared and adopted in haste, have proved on further acquaintance to be somewhat unsuitable for school use. An official *School Journal*, too, is to be issued on the 1st April, 1907, which is to provide, we understand, suitable matter in geography and history, and also to render unnecessary the use of additional readers in the lower standards. Under these circumstances, a revision of our list, say, before the close of 1907, is decidedly desirable.

Much yet remains to be done to beautify and render attractive our school grounds and premises. These, it seems to us, if the school is to be truly an educational centre, should be such as to serve for a model to the whole surrounding district, a pleasure to the eye and a stimulus to the taste of the community. If suitable works of art could be procured for the decoration of our schoolrooms, they would act (if we may be pardoned the expression) as powerful, though passive, agents in the creation and development of artistic sense. By these means and also by the establishment of various institutions in connection with the school—the library, the savings-bank, the flower show, the cadet corps, the athletic club, the swimming-class—the idea of the corporate life of the school might be fostered to a greater extent than it now is. We may be allowed a word as to two of the institutions we have mentioned. There are still several of our larger schools where cadet corps might be easily established, considering that the cadet drill can easily be undertaken in the time allotted to the present compulsory military drill, the only additional labour necessary being attendance at the nearest range for rifle-practice. We regret that the inducements held out by the Department to encourage the formation of swimming-classes have only in one instance been taken advantage of.

It affords us much pleasure to testify to the admirable work that is being done at the woodwork and cookery classes in connection with the schools in Invercargill and Gore. The display of woodwork from the former classes at Christchurch Exhibition was of high merit, and compared most favourably with similar exhibits from other districts with greater experience in the working of such classes. It is a matter of regret that the continuation classes, from which such good results were reasonably expected and the need for which is acknowledged by all authorities, have almost lapsed. The Saturday classes for the study of physical measurements (Mr. Stuckey) and agriculture (Mr. McIndoe) for certificated teachers, as also the classes for the study of drawing (Mr. Brookesmith) and physical drill (Mr. Hanna) for uncertificated teachers and pupil-teachers, were well attended and were beneficial in their operation. Especially was this the case with the classes in drawing, a subject which has for three or four years been a bugbear to prospective candidates for the D certificate. This year the results of the difficult examination in drawing disclosed very decided improvement,