

Education Up-to-Date.

**THE MANUAL TRAINING SYSTEM.
VISIT TO PONSONBY CENTRE.**

The manual training schools established by the Auckland Education Board for the city schools have now been in operation several months, and the system has received the local test so necessary to convince some people of its utility. The result is a complete triumph for the innovation, for the scholars have taken to it with eagerness, and it is already demonstrating its good effect in turning out the thinking yet practical boy required to make a useful man in the world. Manual training does not scorn theory, but puts it to the test, demonstrates its soundness, and gives the scholar a more thorough insight of what he first merely repeats parrot fashion. This is what the manual training centres are doing, and a "Star" reporter spent a very interesting afternoon at the Ponsonby training school watching the process. There were 30 boys, ranging in age from eleven to thirteen, and during the two hours they were given a lesson in elementary geometry, the method of using carpenters' tools and practical wood-working. They carried out their tasks with a readiness often lacking when the lesson had only to be done with the brain, and it was quite pleasing to notice how the handling of tools and models enabled them to clearly grasp principles.

Each boy had a drawing-book, and the practical lesson for the afternoon was in oblique grooving. The scholars had learned how to draw the diagram in their books, and they were now called upon to produce the model in wood. Starting with a plain piece of wood the size of the drawing (which they planed up themselves) they formed an interested circle around the instructor as he demonstrated how to put theory into practice. The use of the tools required was carefully explained, and various boys were called upon to follow out what they had been listening to. The whole class profited by their mistakes, and then everyone "turned to" at the miniature benches. Each boy had the side of a bench to himself with a vice, a tool-chest, and a brush to keep all clear of sawdust and shavings. Occasionally the instructor saw that something still required explaining, and the tinkle of a bell brought all to "attention." There was a call to order to witness the correct sharpening of a chisel, and another to show how the gauge was used. Judging by the manner in which the boys tackled their bits of board, the explanations had been clearly grasped. No slovenly work was allowed. One boy had marked the smooth surface of his board with the diagram, but he had scratched some double lines, so he planed everything out and started afresh. The lesson was taken with the utmost seriousness, but the boys enjoyed it. "I wish we had it every day," said one to me as he deftly used the chisel. No doubt the boys like the change from ex-

clusively brain work, and the training school is so light and airy that it is a pleasure to spend the afternoon there. Practical demonstration is the aim all through, and there are models everywhere. The instructor at Ponsonby, Mr A. T. Trendall, has made a splendid collection of woods and devices for demonstrating his facts with a lucidity unattainable with words. How wood shrinks is demonstrated by a clever wooden hydrometer. A long tongue of porous wood is glued to a veneer which has its grain at right angles to it. The expansion and contraction of the one, depending upon the amount of moisture in the air, causes the tongue to bend one way or the other, and the boys watch their wooden hydrometer closely to see how it coincides with the weather.

Elementary lessons in botany are given, so that the boys know how the timber they work upon has grown. The uses of different varieties of woods, where they grow, the bye-products from trees, the method of seasoning timber, and the manufacture of tools are explained, and, having the timber, the tools and the bye-products before their eyes, the scholars grasp the facts with a readiness which excites envy in the heart of the hard working teacher who gets less extraneous aid.

The boys do not always "hit the right nail on the head," as a story told by Mr Trendall demonstrates. He had explained how glue was extracted from hoofs, bones, etc., and, commencing his useful cross examination of the class to ascertain deficiencies of knowledge he suddenly asked "Upon what tree does glue grow?" The answer came from one boy, "The glue-gum tree, sir." He thought the "blue gum" must have something gummy about it, and thus provided his original answer.

The school is thoroughly well equipped, and everything has a place, neatness being strictly observed. Mr Trendall's collection of woods is remarkably complete and highly educative. The different rates of the growth of trees is strikingly shown by cross sections of their trunks, beautifully polished and mounted. A section of a pinus insignis, which had been growing 18 years, measured 21 inches, but the English oak, planted 77 years, had only reached a diameter of 13 inches.

Just at present the boys visiting the school are in the elementary stages of woodworking, but already their knowledge makes them more useful at home. The first step is edge-grooving, then oblique grooving, inlaying, housing and tonguing joints, chamfering, vertical paring, and dove-tailing. Each step is learned and at once put into practice in the construction of a model. If the work is well done the scholar takes home his model, and this is found to provide a wonderful incentive to careful work. The articles are not merely geometric designs in wood, but take the shape of useful things like watch-stands, toothbrush racks, colander holders, flower-pot stands, and lamp brackets. In the more advanced stages the scholars will make their own T squares and set squares, and will be able to construct pretty diamond mats in parquetry, Oxford picture frames, and ornamental wall brackets.

A class for teachers is held each week in order that country scholars may, in due course, secure the benefit of the manual instruction which the town boys so thoroughly appreciate.

Bowling and Bowlers.

CHAT ON THE SEASON'S PROSPECTS.

Within the last few years the growth of interest in bowling has increased wonderfully. In the old days the average bowler was a short, stout man, with ample spread of waistcoat, generally also past mid life, and possessed of a strong Scotch accent. Now the game has become cosmopolitan, and is indulged in by both old and young, rich and poor, for, whatever a player's financial position may be in the city, on the green at least Bobbie Burns' assertion that "A man's a man for a' that" is duly recognised. As the bowling season has just opened, a representative of the "Auckland Star" waited upon Mr J. M. Lennox, who, besides being an enthusiastic bowler, happens just now to be president of the Remuera Bowling Club, and also of the Auckland Bowling Association. "It is quite true," remarked Mr Lennox, "that of late there has been a growing interest in bowling. At the present time there are about 14 clubs affiliated with the Auckland Bowling Association, each having its own green. Within the last few years greens have been opened at Onehunga, Mt. Eden, Rocky Nook, Mt. Albert, Cambridge, Te Aroha, Rotorua and elsewhere. Altogether there are now about 800 members of the various bowling clubs. It is not alone in New Zealand that the interest in bowling has developed, for I notice that it is set down as one of the Olympic games at the forthcoming St. Louis Exhibition. One great feature about bowlers is the brotherly spirit that prevails all round. There are no disputes on the greens. The skip controls his rink, and in measuring the decision of the third man is final. I don't wonder at the growing interest in bowling here,

because the game is particularly suited for this climate, entailing as it does gentle exercise in warm weather." "Yet I understand bowling was originally a Scotch game?" "That is so, but formerly the green had a bias, and the bowls were round. Now the green is level, and the bowls take the bias." "That must interfere somewhat with the practice of driving that is growing." "I regret that letterly driving has come into bowling, but it is not considered good or safe play. In fact, driving savours of recklessness. A firm resting shot answers all the purposes of driving, and is the higher science of bowling." "I notice that young men have taken to bowling, whereas years ago it was considered an old man's sport?" "Undoubtedly there are many young men now that go in for bowling, and, while I think a more active game, such as cricket, or lawn tennis, would be more suitable to them; still, it is better to see them take up bowling rather than not go in for recreation at all." "There is a tournament this season here, I understand?" "Yes, about the 11th of January. Now that the Auckland Bowling Association has so many clubs affiliated with it there is reason for serious consideration whether or not we should not form an Auckland Provincial Bowling Association, and that the Northern, Auckland, and Dunedin Associations should be affiliated to one New Zealand Association, formed for all over the colony. Steps have already been taken in this matter, and we will confer with the representatives of the Northern Association who visit us next January. Prizes worth about £50 will be open for competition at that tournament. No doubt you have seen them in Mr A. Holden's window, Queen-street. Those prizes are not restricted to members affiliated with the Northern Association, but are open to all-comers, and each member of the winning rinks will get a prize."

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