

*Stewart's Island School:* Established March, 1875; inspected 19th November, 1876. Master, Mr. Arthur Traill.—Registers carefully kept. Highest number on the books, 27. Number present at inspection: Girls, 15; boys, 11: total, 26.

1st Class.—Number in class, 11. Reading: Book, 6th Progressive Reader. The reading of this class was good throughout; that of one very good indeed.

Spelling: Nine good, two fair.

Dictation: Two very good, three good, six fair.

Arithmetic: Compound rules. Five good, six fair.

The exercise books of this class, which are posted up at their homes every night, were very neat and clean.

Several original letters and essays were very well composed. This method adopted by Mr. Traill of exercising the children in English composition is highly to be commended, and it would be well if other masters would adopt the same practice.

2nd Class.—Number in class, 10. Reading: Book read, 4th Progressive Series. Five good, five fair. Meaning of the text understood.

Spelling: Nine good, one fair.

Dictation: Four good, six fair.

Arithmetic: Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Four good, six fair.

3rd Class.—Number in class, 4. Reading words of one syllable. All read well and spelled easily the words of their lesson. Writing: Forming letters and figures on their slates.

Geography: Examined the whole school together in this subject. Their knowledge of the map of New Zealand was very accurate. Most of them were able to point out the principal places on the map of the world. Three very good; three good; rest fair.

Drill: The children have only a slight acquaintance with the movements, but Mr. Traill intends to make them more efficient, seeing as he does what a help drill is towards the maintenance of order.

Writing, throughout the school, both on books and slates, was very fair. Copy-books were clean, and figures and slate-work neat.

Singing: The children cannot sing from notes, but appear very fond of English hymns. They pick up the tunes by ear at the Bluff, but after a time they fall into the monotonous sing-song of Maori melody, and the effect produced by their efforts to render a lively tune is often comical in the extreme.

Cleanliness: The children were all clean, and remarkably well-dressed, very attentive, and well-behaved. The discipline of the school was good. Mr. Traill is happily able to combine kindness with firmness, and his sterling qualities have won the respect and regard of the whole community, who seem thoroughly to appreciate one whose life and character present such a contrast to those Europeans with whom they have unfortunately been so intimately connected.

Attendance: During part of the year the attendance was irregular, owing to most of the families removing to the mutton-bird islands. I am inclined to think that this is not an unmitigated evil. It serves as a safety-valve for the superfluous energies of the scholars, who return with fresh zest to their lessons after six weeks of gipsy life. I read a very amusing essay by one of the pupils on "Mutton-birding," in which the dirt and disorder of the camp were graphically described; and the boils and eruptions on the skin, so common at the time, attributed to gorging on mutton-bird flesh.

Schoolhouse: I was disappointed to find the schoolhouse not yet built. This is very much to be regretted. I pointed out in my report last year that the small, smoky, overcrowded room now occupied as a schoolroom is unfit in every way for the purpose for which it is used. The Natives readily acted on my suggestion and collected £50, which they sent to Dr. Stuart, at Dunedin, who induced the Presbyterian Synod to vote an equal sum of £50, the understanding being that if the people at the Neck raised £100 it would be supplemented by a Government grant of £200. The delay in making the grant has very much disheartened the people, who take a great interest in the matter. Manuel, who generously gave up his house, rent-free, and has promised to convey a suitable site to trustees, is naturally getting impatient at the delay, and has expressed a wish that his house may be vacated as early as possible. The £50 was sent from the island in May, 1876, and shortly after the £50 from the Scotch Synod was added to it. I would most earnestly beg that immediate action may be taken in this matter, and that the erection of this greatly-needed accommodation for the scholars at the Neck may be at once proceeded with.

Since my last visit no less than six marriages have taken place of pupils attending the school. As they were all amongst the oldest and most advanced scholars, their departure was rather disheartening to the master, and the love-making, feasting, and general excitement consequent upon their nuptials are very detrimental to the progress of the scholars. I was agreeably surprised, however, to find that, in spite of all hindrances, the school had made great advance during the year, especially in reading and dictation.

The night school, containing seven males and five females, had only just commenced, and was not inspected.

*Ruapuke School:* Established 1868; inspected 22nd November, 1876.—Number on the books: Boys, 5; girls, 7=12. Present at inspection, 11. Registers carefully kept.

1st class.—Reading: Number in class, 4. Book read, 2nd Lesson Book, Irish Series. One good, two fair, one imperfect. Spelling, good. Dictation, fair; understood text. Arithmetic: Compound rules, four imperfect; simple rules, four fair. Writing: Only commencing to write in copy-books.

2nd class.—Six read easy words of one syllable well; one imperfectly. Writing: Forming letters and figures on their slates.

Geography: The first class had a fair knowledge of the map of New Zealand.

The numbers have greatly fallen off since my last visit, owing to several families having left the island. Ihiaia Whaitiri, who had several children in attendance, has removed to Canterbury, and others have left for Stewart's Island and the mainland.

I am sorry to say that the influence of the chief Topi is not favourable to the school. He seems to have an idea that if the school were closed the reserve in Southland might be sold, and then the