

The girls are drilled twice a week by Sergeant-Major Stevens. Gymnastic classes are conducted during the winter six months of the year by a competent master. Attendance at this class is strongly recommended as a means of physical education.

The school possesses an excellent library, containing upwards of 400 volumes of useful and entertaining books, which may be taken advantage of on payment of an annual subscription of 4s., or a quarterly one of 1s. 6d.

The Boarding Department is under the superintendence of Mrs. Burn, who is assisted in her duties by a well-qualified resident governess. The domestic arrangements approach, as nearly as possible, those of a well-regulated family, and every effort is made to secure the happiness and comfort of the pupils. Constant supervision is exercised, and habits of neatness and order are inculcated. The dormitories are large and well ventilated, and are subdivided into separate bedrooms; and there are four excellent bathrooms. The girls take walking exercise daily, weather permitting, and a croquet lawn is attached to the grounds for the use of the boarders. Arrangements are made for daily practice of music by each boarder on payment of 10s. per quarter for the use of a piano. The boarders are assisted in the preparation of lessons by the resident governess. Private arrangements can be made for the teaching of ornamental work and dressmaking to boarders.

Terms (per quarter): Day pupils (ordinary course), senior classes, £2 10s.; junior classes, £2; day boarders, £3; resident boarders (including washing, but exclusive of day-school fee), £13 2s. 6d.; weekly boarders (without washing), £10 10s.; stationery (including slates, copy-books, pens, ink, blotting and examination paper), 2s. 6d.

LADY PRINCIPAL'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Girls' High School, 30th December, 1877.

I have the honor to submit my report for the seventh session of the Girls' High School. Referring in the first place to the attendance, I have to submit that 173 has been the largest number of pupils on the roll this year; last quarter the number was 148—smaller than it has been for several years. I think some explanation of the difference in numbers from last year (193) may be found in the following facts:—1. Fever has prevailed to a greater or less extent throughout the city and suburbs during the year, and consequently personal or family sickness has kept a number of girls from school. This has been particularly the case during the last quarter. I know that these girls, in several instances, intend returning next year. Fear of fever has also deterred some parents in the country from sending their children to the Dunedin schools. 2. The large decrease in the attendance has been mainly in the Upper School, owing to the fact that a large number of girls in the higher classes, who had attended the school for years, finished their course of study and left at the close of last session. Naturally some little time must elapse before all these places are filled, as a certain standard of attainment must be reached before admission to the Upper School can be secured. It is well known to heads of schools that such crises take place periodically in school history.

A very large proportion of the pupils are this year in the Middle School. This renders a parallel arrangement of classes necessary in that department, answering to Classes C1 and C2. In the highest class (A), small though it has been this year, there have been two divisions in mathematics, French, and German. This necessity for double work, which also means double time, was difficult to meet. I therefore made an arrangement by which the two girls in the higher mathematical division attended Professor Shand's ordinary University class for junior mathematics, along with four of our ex-pupils. This arrangement answered very well in Miss Montgomery's case, but the heavier University work, added to the school class work, proved too much for Miss A. Gillies' strength, and she was obliged to withdraw from the University before the close of the session, and since then from the competition for the position of dux of the school. Miss Montgomery held the honorable position of head of the second class in the University Honor List of her division. I should not like, however, to make this arrangement again, as I consider that University work is too heavy for girls of seventeen, while still occupied with their ordinary school work. The course of study is, as heretofore, on the same plan as I have pursued from the beginning—namely, to give the pupils a knowledge of their own language and arithmetic before passing on to other languages or subjects. History is begun in the lowest class, a very simple text-book being used. French is begun in the upper division of the D Class, and the object-lessons prepare the way for science. In the Upper School, any girls who show talent for mathematical studies begin algebra and Euclid, these subjects being eminently calculated to develop accuracy of thought and judgment. This study, however, is not pursued to such an extent as to do injustice to other subjects equally or more desirable and necessary, only one-fifth of the school time at the most being given to it. German does not become rapidly popular, only ten girls having studied the language this session.

I have during the year held frequent examinations, each being on the work done within a specific period. The midwinter and Christmas examinations covered respectively the work gone over during the preceding half-year. The prizes this year have been awarded on the results of these examinations, not by daily class marks. My object in this arrangement is twofold—namely, to train the pupils to express themselves accurately in writing about the knowledge they have acquired, and to enable the teachers to take up weak points and strengthen them before proceeding to new work. There has been a marked improvement generally in the style of these papers during the session. English composition has been a special point this year. The prizes for this subject were announced at the beginning of the session, and competed for in school under the superintendence of the teachers.

I desire to say that I should like very much to see the parents of pupils now and then in the school. I make them welcome at any time to see the classes at work. One of our greatest troubles is unprepared or badly-prepared lessons. Unless this is carefully seen to on the part of parents there is no satisfactory progress, if any at all. It has been found too often necessary to "keep in" the pupils,