

class for teachers is also held at the Thames. On the whole some considerable progress has been made. Three music teachers are employed as hitherto—namely, one at Auckland, one at the Thames, and one in the Waikato District. They are doing their work fairly well. Objections are sometimes made to the expense incurred for teaching music, and what may be called the artistic parts of drawing. It is said that these subjects are not practical, and that the money their teaching costs had better be otherwise spent. It seems to me an eminently practical thing to imbue a people with a taste for refined and intellectual pleasures, pleasures which cost little, which leave no sting behind, and which act as safeguards against coarse, hurtful, and costly enjoyments. I believe it is well to sedulously foster those “artistic aspirations,” to quote the words of the late Chairman of the Board, “which lead to true refinement of character, elevating private life, and ultimately exalting a people.” I believe, too, with Dr. Campbell, that “it is a good and desirable thing that we should have the fact brought home to us that there are aims in life other than mere money-making, other than mere sensuous enjoyments, and that the devotion of the mind, in an artistic direction, is not incompatible with the every-day drudgeries of life.”

The acquirements of the pupils in arithmetic—judging from the results—are, on the whole, fairly satisfactory. I cannot say that I am satisfied with the methods employed in all cases. In the junior classes there is too much learning of tables by rote. This is, of course, utterly wrong. Children should learn them experimentally, from the ball-frame, from coins, from measures, and weights—seen and felt and handled. Some improvement in this direction is, I am glad to say, taking place.

The laws of health are fairly taught. No man can with impunity remain ignorant of these laws, and good must result from a generally diffused knowledge of them. By-and-by people will probably adopt methods of living suitable to the climate. But it is rather wonderful, or perhaps it is not, how many resent being disturbed in their old traditional, comfortable ways of killing themselves. Much good continues to be done by the teaching of gymnastics. The number of girls in the schools with contracted chests has perceptibly lessened, though the present style of dress neutralizes, in a great measure, the good sought to be done.

In connection with the laws of health there are some matters which call for special notice. The instructions of the Board provide that certain intervals—each of ten minutes or so—shall be given during school hours. These intervals are essential to the health of the teacher and of the pupil, as well as to the efficiency of the one and the intellectual progress of the other. I regret to have to say that some teachers have taken upon themselves the grave responsibility of depriving their assistants and pupils of these intervals. I do not find that these teachers have refrained from signing a certificate monthly that the instructions of the Board have been strictly adhered to. Another matter of importance is that teachers too often neglect to thoroughly air the rooms during intervals, and after school, and pupils are thus forced to breathe, from their entrance, a vitiated atmosphere. Then, care enough is not taken to adjust the openings of doors and windows, so that, while the ventilation is sufficient, the pupils are not exposed to injurious draughts. A high authority thus refers to the effect on pupils of breathing impure air: “It reacts on the blood, and this again on the brain. The teacher, as well as the children, all suffer from the same cause. He languidly delivers a lesson to pupils who more languidly receive it. They are no longer able to concentrate their attention. They answer his half-understood questions carelessly and incorrectly. Not appreciating the true state of the case, he treats them as wilfully indifferent, and punishes the offenders, as they feel, unjustly.” The conduct of a teacher who does not take pains to preserve the health of his pupils seems to me little short of criminal, and the responsibility of the teacher is the greatest where large numbers are herded together. In many schools the health of the pupils is injured by too much home-work being given. Home-work should not occupy at most more than an hour, and should be of a light and not perplexing kind. Getting poetry by heart, preparing a reading-lesson, or a lesson in physical geography, would be suitable work. Arithmetic should never be given as home-work. Quantities of it are often given, merely, as it would appear, to take up the time which nature requires for recreation. This practice, if the pupil knows how to work, is useless; if he does not, and is helped, is demoralizing; if he does not know, and is not helped, that means perplexity and mental injury.

Some remarks, in a sermon by Dr. Talmage, printed in the *Herald* of the 26th February, are very pertinent to this subject: “When children spend several hours in school, and then must spend two or three hours in preparation for the next day, will you tell me how much time they will have for sunshine and fresh air, and the obtaining of that exuberance which is necessary for the duties of coming life?” And, again, “There are many schools to-day which are preparing tens of thousands of invalid men and invalid women for the future, so that, by the time the child’s education is finished, the child is finished.” Surely no care is too great to avoid the danger of turning out a race of invalid men and women.

Many people find fault with the elementary schools because they are not something else, because they are not, in a great measure, technical schools. But the object of the schools is not to teach the pupils particular trades, but to train their faculties so that they can turn them to account in any occupation whatever. To quote the words of Mr. Payne, “Although education is to be a preparation for after life, yet it is to be a general, not a professional, preparation, and cannot provide for minute or special contingencies. The object of education is to form the man, not the baker; the man, not the lawyer; the man, not the civil engineer.” I do not, of course, mean that something special may not be taught in the school. Mechanical drawing may be taught, for instance. Country teachers may do much to make their pupils acquire knowledge useful to farmers.

The question as to what manner of men and women we are training up in the public schools is one of grave importance. Are they to be, to use the words of the headmaster of the Church of England Grammar School at Melbourne, “a race of men who will be incapable of doing anything which is disagreeable to them?” Another writer speaks of the Australian youth’s want “of deference to others, respect for authority, reverence for age, veneration for worth, and belief in the existence of anything higher and better than the self-opinionated youth himself.” And, again, “The idea of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice seems to be altogether foreign to the mind of Young Australia; and there-