

depends almost entirely on whether he makes a good start or a bad one. It should always be remembered that the younger Maori children are, the more flexible are their organs of speech. A child of six or seven years of age may easily be taught to pronounce English almost faultlessly. A lad beginning to learn the tongue at the age of fourteen will always pronounce it with a strong Maori accent, even if he should learn to speak it fluently. Hence a teacher can hardly bestow too much pains on his youngest class. He should never allow himself to think that a *fairish* pronunciation of words will *do* for the First Standard, and that, by-and-by, when the little ones get into a higher class, he will be able to make them pronounce English really well. It is indeed a case of "now or never." As the children grow older, he will find it impossible to improve their articulation at all, without bestowing as much time and patience upon it to produce a small result as would have made their pronunciation nearly perfect when the children were younger.

When a teacher is satisfied that his children can pronounce English words correctly, and that they are capable of being taught to understand the meaning of easy pieces of English poetry, he will find them derive much benefit from learning to recite such pieces simultaneously in classes. The practice of singing easy English songs is also beneficial, if the children are made to pronounce every word very distinctly. The teacher will, of course, remember that every word so learnt will continue to be a part of the child's stock of vocables, and that any trouble expended on making the pronunciation of such words really good is well expended. For the rest, the First Standard English is generally well taught—sometimes exceedingly well. There is one point, however, that seems to have been very commonly overlooked. Children to pass Standard I. must be able to give the plural of nouns in common use. It is only occasionally that pupils of a school have been found able to give the plural of such nouns as *pen*, *nose*, *man*, *child*. At one or two places in the North this difficulty has been entirely overcome. In most of the other northern schools it seems to have been regarded as insuperable. This difficulty is to be overcome by training the children to recognise the difference between such words as *pen*—*pens*, *nose*—*noses*, *man*—*men*, pronounced very slowly and distinctly; by making them distinguish the same words when written on the black-board in script or print characters; and, by causing them to read such words till they can do it without making mistakes. When the difficulty of distinguishing and pronouncing the words has been got over, one or more pens, pencils, or boxes should be placed in view of the whole class, and the children should be made to say "one pen, two pens, three pens," &c., as the case may be. Similar methods will enable the children to distinguish between *I* and *you*; *he*, *she*, *it*, and *they*, for Standard II.; and between *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*, or *all*, *many*, *few*, *every*, for Standard III.

The meanings of short and easy sentences as required for Standard II. may be best taught in connection with the reading lessons. This part of the school-work is tested by means of Maori words which the children have to translate into English, and very easy English sentences which they have to translate into Maori. When children thoroughly know the meaning of an English sentence they find no difficulty in rendering it into Maori. In teaching English composition for Standard III., the teacher, if he know a little Maori, will find it highly advantageous to write a few easy Maori sentences on the black-board, and then, in concert with the class, write down the English translation below. Each pupil should be made to copy this translation on his slate as it is finished. When the sentences have been all dealt with in this way, the slate work should be examined and corrected. Then the slates should be cleaned, and the pupils should be required to write on paper the translation of the sentences without any assistance.

To prepare them for the English of Standard IV., the pupils should be well practised in framing such sentences as: "I see the boy now;" "I saw the girl yesterday;" "I shall see Henry to-morrow;" "I may see Mary if I go to town." Such work, if thoroughly well done, will enable children, without any further special training, to translate such Maori expressions as "Kua kite ahau;" "E kore ahau e kite," &c. Their ability to do this will show that they possess the knowledge required for the standard. The English composition of Standard IV. presents more difficulty than any other part of the Native-school work. The difficulty may be overcome in some such way as this: Let the teacher select a short fable, say, "The Fox and the Grapes," and read it to the class till he is quite sure that all have grasped the meaning of the story. He will then get the pupils to name, in proper order, the words that stand for the leading ideas in the fable. These words should be written on the black-board in some convenient way, *e.g.*, "fox, travelling—weather, hot—heat, thirsty—saw, grapes," &c. The pupils should then be got to frame sentences containing these leading words: "A fox had been travelling all day. The weather had been very hot. The heat had made the fox extremely thirsty. He saw some fine grapes hanging on a vine," &c. When the class have gone over this work together, each pupil should be made to write out the story without assistance. The pupils should be trained from the first to make their sentences very short. They will thus get into the way of writing clearly, if not very elegantly. A few months' practice at this kind of work will fit the children for beginning to write short letters. Pupils should be taught to date and address letters correctly. They should be made to write only about subjects that they are thoroughly familiar with; and great care should be taken to prevent them from getting into the habit of making long, straggling sentences. In some of the schools in the far north the elder children keep diaries. When pupils are far enough advanced to do that sort of thing well, it affords them excellent practice in composition to make a daily record of what has occurred in the school or in the village.