

forty scholars; there are likewise a large cheerful dining-room, a good garden, and a suitable playground. Probably the buildings now in occupation will suffice for the requirements of the Institution for the next few years, should the Government deem it advisable to prolong the present arrangement beyond the time originally contemplated.

To dilate upon the early work of the elementary class, as was done in last year's report, would seem like the repetition of an old story. I must remark, however, that all the new arrivals are again successful in the enunciation of vowels and consonants, and that some of them promise to become very apt scholars.

A marked difference is noticeable in the pupils that have had a full year's tuition. Six of these form a separate class. They begin to realise the blessing and advantage of a knowledge of language. With smiling countenances they await their teacher entering the classroom, and are proud to greet him with the usual "Good morning." Although the mechanical imperfections of their speech are by no means overlooked, yet the principal care is now bestowed upon the mental part of the work. For these more advanced pupils articulation is no longer to be wholly or even partially mechanical. Words are to be names of objects, names of colour and form, and names of actions; no longer simple muscular movements of the tongue and mouth, but intelligent movements to which the hearing community attaches meaning; symbols used with a due observance to rule and order.

Special regard is also paid to the choice of matter. Sentences are carefully selected for their simplicity. Lessons, specially written for them, are now read and explained, and frequently object-lessons are prepared with them to sharpen their powers of observation. To make the matter clearer—if, for example, the object "dog" were under observation, the teacher's proceeding might be somewhat thus: Pointing with an inquiring face to the dog as a whole, and then to the parts of its body, he would ask, "What?" and the pupil would answer (in words more or less distinct, of course), "a dog," "eyes," "ears," "legs," "a back," "a tail," "hair," &c. If, the same course being pursued with other parts less prominent to the sight, the pupil were to indicate by gesture, or by the word *no*, that he was ignorant of the name, the teacher would, after repeating the question, supply the words "a skin," "a neck," "flesh," "bone," "a backbone," "ribs," "teeth," "a tongue," "a jaw," "a jawbone," always taking care that the names follow, not precede, the indication of the parts referred to. To an experienced teacher the task of pursuing the subject by further explaining to the pupil "hearing," "sight," "feeling," &c., is very fascinating; but with a young class he must restrain his own eagerness, and lead them on to another track equally interesting and necessary. The dog might be a large one, and, if so, the teacher might, with a special view to a practical illustration, attempt to lift the dog on to the table. The failure would doubtless be accompanied by roars of laughter, and the opportunity ought to be seized by explaining to the children that, in answer to the question *how* the dog is, we say "*heavy*," "*large*," &c. In a similar way, other names denoting colour, size, condition, &c., as black, white, long, sharp, quick, soft, hard, gentle, fierce, &c., may be elicited, and sentences composed with the pupils thus: *What?* A dog. *How?* Black? The dog is black. *What?* A tail. *How?* Long. The tail is long. Teeth, white. The teeth are white, &c. Further intellectual exercises are: What is the dog doing? Or simply, *What doing?* Standing. *Where?* On the floor. The dog is standing on the floor. Lying. *Where?* Under the table. The dog is lying under the table. And again, with a view of giving a notion of words denoting *time*: The dog is running *now*? No; will run *after*. The dog is eating *now*? No; will eat *this afternoon*.

Having practised the pupils in noticing other objects in a like manner, the master may write out on the blackboard short descriptions, in which the pupils should assist, thus: That is a dog. The dog is black. He is large and strong. He has four legs. He can walk. He can run and jump also. The dog has two eyes. He can see. He is looking now. He has two ears. He can hear. The dog has a mouth and a tongue. Can he talk? No, he cannot. He cannot talk, but he can bark, &c.

By thus describing the *modus operandi* of the method of instruction, a faint idea may be conveyed of the difficulty there is in bringing these afflicted children to any light of speech and understanding of language at all. One rule in particular should be adhered to in all their teaching. This is: Whatever the subject-matter under consideration may be, and whether the process of dealing with it be analytical or synthetical, the means taken ought to be simple, the manner cheerful, and the treatment thorough.

In conclusion, I must mention that the Institution has been laid under obligation to two Christchurch ladies: to Mrs. R. Rhodes, for kindly sending the pupils a parcel of picture-books as a Christmas present; and to Mrs. Washbourne, of Riccarton, for liberally providing them with a long day's enjoyment in her own grounds.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

I have, &c.,

G. VAN ASCH.

No. 4.

REPORT by MEDICAL OFFICER.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 13th June, 1881.

I have the honor to forward a report on the Deaf-and-Dumb Asylum at Sumner.

There are at present 21 pupils, 13 boys and 8 girls, their ages ranging from six to nineteen years. They have been all in good health until recently; but, on the 20th May last, a lad from