

3. HEADMASTER'S REPORT.

SIR,—

Girls' High School, Auckland, 25th January, 1886.

In reply to your letter No. 3,032, of date 24th December, 1885, I have the honour to forward my report for the year ending the 18th December, 1885.

The school opened for its year's work on Monday, the 2nd February, and during the first week 173 pupils attended. We have received no large accession of numbers since that date, but the attendance has steadily, though slowly, increased. During the second term 189 pupils were enrolled, and in the third term the number of names on the roll was 199. The work which has been done in the school during the year will be best seen from a detailed report on each subject. With regard to the heartiness which was infused into the work both by teachers and pupils I can speak in the highest terms.

English.—Selections from the works of various writers have been critically and exhaustively studied. Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar, Richard II., and Merchant of Venice; Milton's Comus and Il Penseroso; Scott's Lady of the Lake and Lay of the Last Minstrel; Chaucer's Prologue to Canterbury Tales, have been in most cases wholly, but in some only partially read, by one or other of our highest Forms, while the lower Forms have studied with equal care pieces selected from their reading book. In each instance portions have been committed to memory, and in the lower classes the pupils have been required to reproduce in writing the passage they have learnt. This practice, together with that of carefully copying passages from their reading books, and also of writing passages from dictation, form a very important feature of the Lower School work. The result has been that the spelling, which was in a very poor state at the beginning of the year, has much improved, though it is far from what I hope to see it. The study of English grammar has been carried on throughout the whole school, care being taken in the younger classes that mere rote work is not done. Very fair progress has been made in the subject. The practice of English composition, towards the improvement of which our whole English teaching should tend, has been carefully carried out.

History.—Various portions of the history of England have been studied by the various Forms. I regret that we have not been able to see our way to read any Roman history in our higher Forms, but I have hopes that the defect will be remedied next year.

Geography.—This subject has been studied throughout the school with tolerable success. In the younger Forms the geography of New Zealand, Australia, and also the chief ocean routes, have occupied the time. In the Upper School geography of a wider scope has been attempted, also physical geography has been studied by the elder girls, who have entered into the work with a great deal of interest.

Laws of Health.—Berners's First Lessons in Health has been the text-book for this subject in the younger Forms. They have mastered the principles of the subject very fairly, and understand some of the simpler rules for the preservation of health.

Object Lessons on various subjects, chiefly those of natural history, have been given in the Lower School. The time devoted to this lesson is looked forward to with great interest by the younger children. In connection with this subject I intend that a course of lessons on domestic economy should be given next year to some of our higher Forms. This is one of those technical subjects which should undoubtedly be included within the curriculum of a girls' school. A course of lectures on elementary chemistry will also be given in the Upper School during the course of the year.

French.—Good work has been done throughout the school in this subject. We suffer from one drawback, however, which I hope to see remedied next year. Two elementary text-books are in use in the school. This renders it exceedingly awkward when a girl is to be promoted from a Form where the one is in use to another Form where the second text-book is read. I shall ask the Board at the proper time to allow a change in the printed "Programme of Study" to be made, so that one elementary text-book only should be used in the school. The advantage of this plan is obvious, inasmuch as the child advances in the school as she reads further in the book, and the knowledge she has gained in the earlier stages is utilised as she proceeds. Selections from various French authors have been carefully read in the upper Forms, and the very important study of French composition has received its due share of attention.

Latin.—In the Latin school, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Livy, and Cæsar have been read by our various Forms. I have strong hopes that the scholarship winners who joined the school in September last will ere long make their mark in this subject. In our upper Forms attention has been paid to the translation of English passages into Latin. In this important branch of work very fair success has been attained. During the third term ninety-three girls read this subject.

German.—The German class, which is held at the same time as the Latin, contained during last term eleven pupils. Great difficulties present themselves to the teacher of this class, inasmuch as the girls who offer themselves for instruction do not constitute a class, but are of very different degrees of attainment. I regret that the Board will lose the services of Miss Evers, who has conducted the class, under very disadvantageous circumstances, as successfully as could reasonably be hoped.

Greek.—An attempt was made in the month of June to begin a Greek class in this school. When the subject was first mentioned sixteen girls gave in their names as being anxious to join a Greek class if such were formed. On its being ascertained, however, that it was necessary to make Greek alternative with French, there was a general desire on the part of those who had come forward to continue the study of French. Consequently the project of forming a Greek class at that time fell through.

Mathematics.—In this important subject the school is undoubtedly weak. This weakness shows itself in failing to grapple with problems—i.e., failing to apply principles which have pre-