

A perusal of the subjoined list of pupils will show that all parts of the colony sent representatives to our class-room. Of the twelve Otago pupils, five came from Dunedin, two from Stirling, one from Greytown, one from Orepuki, one from Port Chalmers, one from Palmerston, and one from Oamaru. Of the nine pupils from Canterbury, four came from Christchurch, one from Ashburton, one from Akaroa, one from Yaldhurst, one from Kaiapoi, and one from Irwell. Of the two pupils from Nelson, one came from Reefton, one from Waimangaroa, and there was one pupil from Brunnerton in Westland. The North Island quota consisted of ten pupils from the Provincial District of Auckland, viz., six from the City of Auckland, two from Kawakawa, one from the Thames, and one from Gisborne. Of the five pupils from the Provincial District of Wellington, two came from the City of Wellington, one from Wanganui, one from Patea, and one from Marton. The two pupils from Hawke's Bay came both from Napier. The one pupil from South Australia also remained.

Amongst the many visits that were paid to the institution none seemed to interest us more than the one from an old pupil who had left school the previous Christmas. This youth, a lad of seventeen, had come specially to show us his engine as he termed it. We were aware that even before leaving us he had devoted some of his leisure time to the making of a few wheels, iron plates, &c., with the idea of turning out some particular work, but none of his teachers expected to see such an elaborate piece of mechanism as this boy had brought in the shape of a nicely-finished model of a stationary steam-engine, furnished with boiler, gauge, &c., and quite complete in other parts. Knowing as we do, from various sources, that this youth, in the construction of this model, had had no assistance whatever from any one, and having been witness of its actual working on our premises, I cannot but regard the boy's mechanical contrivance in any other light than as a credit to his skill, perseverance, and intelligence, and as a proof that in his case, at any rate, the labourious hours of instruction devoted to his mental cultivation have assuredly not been labours in vain.

That the educational work of the institution is bearing fruit in other departments is manifest from the fact that several of the elder girls can with ease handle the flat-iron and work the sewing-machine, understand how to make butter, and can ably assist in the duties and routine of an ordinary household. One girl from the North Island while at home for the holidays cut out and made her younger sisters' dresses. A glance at her own, also made by her own hand, is sufficient to convince that it would not disgrace the work of a competent dressmaker. The more I see of the aptitude that many of these colonial deaf children show in practically mastering different branches of household economy, the deeper I am convinced of the importance there is to provide a permanent institution with suitable conveniences and ample room, so that greater attention may be paid than it is possible to do now to all matters bearing on the industrial pursuits and the material welfare of our deaf-and-dumb.

To give one more typical illustration. At the close of the past year the oldest boy in the school, a lad of seventeen or eighteen, left the institution for good. Being one of the elder children of a large family, and of a somewhat thoughtful turn of mind, the boy fairly gauged his future position in the social scale, and had on that account for some time evinced a strong determination to acquire as much practical knowledge of things as time and opportunity would allow of. On leaving he was not only possessed of a fairly good education, but had also acquired a good knowledge of gardening, and had obtained considerable experience in a variety of matters, such as the tending of a quiet horse and driving it, the feeding of cattle, pig-killing and the curing of bacon, haymaking, including the use of the scythe, &c. To what good use it could all be turned is clear from the result, as stated in a letter from the father, saying that his son got employment with a neighbouring farmer at a remuneration of 10s. a week and all found.

The yearly vacation was spent by the pupils at their respective homes as usual. Apart from the evident advantages of meeting their parents and other relatives, there are those arising from a change of air and scene, which, added to the beneficial effects of the rest, gives them increased zeal for and renewed interest in their studies for the coming year.

While in the North Island last January I had again occasion to examine several children, supposed to be deaf-mutes, but who are in reality defective in intellect. Of this class New Zealand seems to have her full share. I was also called upon by the father of a full-grown deaf-mute, who was anxious to ascertain if his daughter could still be admitted into the institution. As the girl seemed very intelligent and anxious to learn, it was painful to me to have to intimate that it was too late, her age being far beyond thirteen, the time named by us in the original prospectus as the latest age at which deaf-mutes ought to be admitted.

From this and other similar cases, which have recently been brought under my notice, I have reason to believe that there are still numbers of deaf-mute children between the ages of seven and twelve, hidden in country places, who are not brought under the humanising influence of suitable education. Could not national school teachers be prevailed upon to show their sympathy for these afflicted ones by reporting, if discovered, their names and addresses to the Inspector-General of Schools, Wellington, or to the Principal of this institution? A word of advice also from teachers or others to timid or negligent parents would probably bring about the desired effect of getting such children to school, and in thus preventing a recurrence of cases like the one referred to above. They would really perform a most charitable act.

At the request of several of the parents of pupils, and to the evident delight of the pupils themselves, a commencement has been made this year with the teaching of drawing. Miss Rose Budden, a young lady well known in art circles in Christchurch, has been engaged as teacher. Miss Budden visits the institution every Thursday afternoon; and, judging by the progress which the pupils have already made, I am satisfied that our selection of teacher has been a fortunate one.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

G. VAN ASCH.