

In any case, by the method adopted in the *Journal* the sequence of history is lost and civics receives inadequate treatment. Arnold Foster's *Citizen Reader*, New Zealand edition, gives in interesting fashion much of what is called "Civics." Tombs's *Almanack* (Whitcombe and Tombs; 1s.) is also a good publication, summing up a number of enactments that it is useful for the child to know, especially concerning local bodies and their constitution, and so revealing in some measure the social web that gathers each citizen in its mesh. Empire Day celebrations were postponed to the 3rd June, when they were held with much ceremony at Springlands, where the children assembled from most of the schools on the Wairau Plain, and spent what would be to them a memorable day. The Dominion Day Proclamation and Sir Joseph Ward's message to the people have also gone forth to the schools.

Thanks are due to the Department for the distribution of a series of battle-pictures.

SINGING.—Fifty-five schools made more or less successful attempts at this subject. Comparatively few were able to treat a part-song effectively. In the smaller schools I was satisfied with a few simple songs nicely rendered. The Pythagoreans had an idea that as the thunderstorm purges the heavy atmosphere of its glooms, so, by a natural physiological reaction on the mind, singing clears away worries and vague uneasinesses that tend to accumulate. We say, "So-and-so worries; he is downhearted." Pythagoras would say, "Let him sing, and the air will assume a brightness and sparkle he had not noticed before." There are sound reasons, apart from the action of the lungs, why the teacher should intersperse his day with brief snatches of song.

NEEDLEWORK.—In the larger schools round Blenheim needlework was taught in the upper standards only when the cookery class was not operating; but in general the work shown was highly satisfactory. The cutting-out in Standard VI was not so successful. A few schools devoted too much time to one stitch, and failed to show examples of all the kinds of work prescribed. This is a species of manual work with its own objects. One of the ends is to familiarise the pupils with various uses of the needle. This is educational, and is best attained by making a sampler. Should time then remain it may be devoted to the utilitarian object of providing specific garments.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.—It is somewhat difficult to gauge what is being done under this head, as it does not appear on the school time-table; but the tone and discipline are satisfactory, and since moral instruction, whether detailed or casual, is one of the most effective instruments of discipline, there seems little reason to doubt that the teachers are constantly placing before the children its chief lessons. A good teacher will look on any of his pupils who goes astray as one of his failures, and he will sum up his successes not only by examination, but also by the number of his pupils who become striking examples of good citizenship. Mr. Stetson, Superintendent of the schools of Maine, says that the well-trained pupil looks on duty as opportunity. The teaching of this aspect may be commended to the teachers.

HEALTH.—This subject is apt to be overlooked or treated in a very cursory fashion, so teachers are reminded that instruction under this head is mandatory. The more extended use of breathing exercises in the drill has given an additional nucleus for lessons of this kind. The *School Journal* does good work by introducing topics specially bearing on this subject and on the one mentioned above.

RECITATION.—In fifty-one schools recitation was dealt with satisfactorily. The others either failed to prepare a sufficiency of verses, or to memorise faithfully, or to show that the thought was understood. Only four schools were accounted excellent. The chief failings were the want of phrasing, of modulation, and especially of dramatic force. In the upper standards there is probably no lesson that can be made more interesting in the hands of teachers gifted with imagination, with a sense of poetic diction, and an appropriate knowledge of the history of words, such as may be learned from Archbishop Trench's works. There is required also an understanding of figurative language, of the echoing of sound and sense, and of concise expression. Elocution becomes comparatively simple when the above conditions are met. There is comparatively little difference between good reading aloud and good recitation. The freedom from the printed word, however, leaves open the possibility of a more exquisite interpretation. In the lower standards all that is required of the children is a sympathetic rendering of pieces embodying thoughts well within their range, but the teacher may be more careful than he frequently is in seeing that the poems are, in their simple way, models of tasteful expression.

DRILL.—There are cadet companies in connection with most of the larger schools, and they preserve a highly satisfactory degree of efficiency. Only two small schools, comprising eight children in all, failed to prepare the children in this subject. In both schools the teachers were in charge of schools for the first time. In thirty-five schools the drill was considered "good"—that is to say, the exercises were strenuous and quick, and attention was given to posture and to breathing. Breathing exercises are practised in nearly all schools, and already the narrow-chested boy is beginning to disappear. In a few cases the breathing exercises were taken in school, or boys went through them with coats tightly buttoned. These matters need remedying. Of the 235 cadets in the district, 147 visited the Exhibition held in Christchurch, with manifest advantage. The fact that shooting is made compulsory in order to earn capitation should tend to improvement. The interest shown by a number of local gentlemen in the doings of the corps gives an additional stimulus. Mr. J. C. Chaytor during the past year, with his wonted generosity, gave £105 to provide five annual prizes for shooting, and Mr. Nosworthy presented a handsome champion belt for competition. That these have produced some effect is evidenced by the position of two of our boys, who in the class firing gained eighth and ninth places for the colony. Four of the Chaytor prizes were captured this year by the North Marlborough Cadet Company. The remaining one went to Picton. Dr. Thomas, reporting on the Exhibition camp, suggests that all cadets should be taught first aid. The suggestion may be commended to those in charge.

Now that the cadets are under an officer of the Department the time is ripe for reorganization in a number of respects, such as audit, promotion of officers, inventory of goods, scheduling and