

school with fine buildings, elegant, although not architecturally elaborate, with good spacious classrooms and wide passages, gymnasiums, cloak-rooms, rooms for teachers and the medical officer. This large school has a roll of over 1,900 children; there are 75 or 76 teachers, including the headmaster, the headmistress of the girls' side, and the chief assistant, who is the deputy of the headmaster on the boys' side. The children have single desks, graded according to the heights of the children, but not adjustable. Many of the children evidently came from poor homes, but all were neatly dressed, and they looked very clean and happy. There are six classes, from the Prima to the Sexta, but each of these classes has several divisions on each side of the school, in which, with a few exceptions in the junior classes, boys and girls are entirely separated. The classes are all taught by adults (trained teachers nearly all), and are small in size; of the ten or twelve classes I saw, the largest contained 34 pupils, the smallest 23, and the average number of pupils present per teacher was 27. The work in Italian struck me as particularly good; the answering was clear in enunciation, and evidently great pains are taken to keep the pronunciation pure; it was easier, therefore, to follow the children with their slow, clear utterance than it was to understand the more rapid and idiomatic conversation of the teachers. As in Switzerland and in most of the German elementary schools, one of the first lessons is a lesson in the mother-tongue based upon what the children have observed. The Saturday before my visit (which took place on a Monday morning) the swallows had reached Rome from Africa; I had seen old and young alike standing in the streets and watching the weary wanderers seeking for resting-places in the gardens of Queen Margherita's Palace. Accordingly, I was not altogether surprised to hear the first question asked in one of the sections of the girls' Prima: "What did you see on Saturday afternoon?" But I was somewhat surprised to see a little girl (aged 6 years and 7 months, as I was informed) stand up, and give seven clearly expressed consecutive sentences, telling the class what she had seen and knew about the swallows. She made one little slip (a colloquialism), which was quickly corrected in a kindly manner; several other pupils gave additional details, until we had quite a simple natural history of the swallow. Once or twice a child was checked by the teacher's inquiry: "How do you know that? Did you see it?" One child promised to bring a dead swallow which had fallen into a neighbour's yard, and was allowed to go home to bring it for the other children to see. Pictures of the swallow were then shown, with a map of the Central Mediterranean, showing Italy and North Africa, and the distance was measured by one of the children to see how many times as far it was from Africa to Rome as it is from Naples to Rome. The arithmetic is good, but, as all tables are decimal, the mastery of the first four rules is practically all that has to be taught. Simple mensuration is always taught, generally apparently by actual measurements—the only rational way. "Lavoro"—handwork—is taken by most of the pupils on Saturday morning; in the upper classes of the girls' side, this is nearly always some form of needlework, knitting, crocheting, or sometimes lace-making.

The carton-work in the middle classes is very neatly and accurately done; the work consists largely of geometrical models, trays, boxes, and representations of common domestic objects. In some schools boys learn woodwork and wirework, and do work in two or more materials in combination to designs by themselves. Drawing of the nets, and drawing from the finished objects are always features of the instruction.

The importance of teaching the domestic arts to girls is being more and more recognised in Italy, probably owing to the influence of Switzerland, but at present these studies are "facoltativi" or optional in the primary schools, although the Government makes special grants for this and other forms of manual work. The weak point of the system is the same as that in the majority of French schools—the comparatively early age at which children leave school: in the Scuola Regina Elena none of the pupils were, I believe, more than 13 years old, and many of the sharper ones leave school at 12; in the French rural schools pupils of 11 and 12 often gain the "certificat des études," which entitles them to exemption from school attendance. Attendance during the compulsory period is now being tolerably well enforced in Rome, and still more so in Northern Italy; but in the south it is very laxly enforced, and the number of "analfabeti"—persons unable to read—in the population is very large. In one of the southern provinces (Calabria) the number of "analfabeti" above six years of age is 78·68 per cent. of the population; in Rome the proportion is 43·83 per cent. In Lombardy and Piedmont it falls to 21·58 and 17·69 per cent. respectively; while for the whole population of the kingdom above six years of age, the percentage of illiterates is 48·49 per cent. The proportion is