

For the REVIEW

## The Board Schools of Huddersfield.

The opinion of good judges and the statistical tables place these fine schools among the very best in England for large average attendance and general efficiency. The buildings are very fine; and if ten square feet are allowed for each child as recommended, accommodation is afforded for 9,945 children. The number on the registers on the last day of the school year was 9,148. It is pleasant to record that practically all the children of school-going age are on the registers and the average of attendance is steadily increasing.

I must here gratefully acknowledge my obligation to Inspector S. B. Tait, whose skilful planning enabled me to see so much of these schools. The first department visited was the kindergarten, under Miss Tattersall, a pupil of Froebel's widow. She was ably assisted by pupil teachers and monitors. The free-hand drawing on slates had just been completed by the upper class, some of whom had been attending for two or three years. The designs were well conceived and very neatly executed, and some would have been creditable to children twice their age. The marching plain and in figures was excellent in its freedom and precision. Singing by *note* was succeeded by calisthenic drill with wands; the value of this for moral training impressed me greatly, for no such large body of children who were ill-natured or inattentive could have gone through it without some of them being injured. Reading and writing are begun in the upper class of this kindergarten.

The collection of work done by the children was particularly good in card-board work, embroidery and perforating and basket-work in straw, paper and other fragile materials. The youngest was two years old and we were told that no child would be refused admission. Evidently this Huddersfield School Board understands its business and is prepared to do it. The reading and speaking was much better than in the schools of Hastings, where the vicious habit prevails of squeezing out the vowels like a down-east Yankee. A detailed account of all I saw would fill this number of the REVIEW, but I must refer to the sewing, darning and knitting in the different grades, which was beautiful. The first darning is done on canvas with two colors, red and blue, crossing each other. The next step is to darn a small piece of whole knitted underwear and cross it; then a worn piece—a little broken—is done; next a piece slit diagonally is darned and crossed. Thus this important means of repair is proceeded with systematically, so that a child of ten will do beautiful work. Patching is done; first, with plain, white

cotton, and proceeds gradually until an intricate pattern of printed cotton is matched so carefully that the patch is almost invisible. Would not a little of this sort of work be useful in our schools? I was shown in one school, in the girls' department, a large press packed with night-dresses and other ladies' underwear, aprons, etc., and knitted socks and stockings. Among the latter were some of the finest knickerbocker stockings for gentlemen. The articles are sold at the bare cost of the material, which is supplied by the Board.

A very enjoyable visit was made to the cooking class, presided over by a lady who holds a first-class diploma from the National School of Cookery. Instead of drawing, the girls who have passed a certain standard have two weekly lessons in cooking, one being in the theory and the other in the practical work. There were over thirty present, half of them taking up the practical work. One was scouring her table, another cleaning knives and forks, another mixing and beating up a seed-cake, while one had baked, *to a turn*, a plate of buns, of which we were kindly invited to partake. The other lessons were hashed beef, done up tastily, and cup-cake. It was a cheering sight to one who loves his fellows to see these little girls, looking so neat and clean and happy, busily employed in learning the practice of an art which adds so much to human well-being. Three well-cooked, daintily served meals a day in the poor man's home will powerfully predispose to abstinence from intoxicating drinks. The room was filled with a large range and an excellent gas-stove. The children can buy and take home what they cook for the trifle which the materials cost. It is an incentive to diligence, as the girls are charmed with the idea of learning to cook. A pleasant and instructive day was wound up by seeing over 800 children go through calisthenic drill *without* wands to the notes of the piano, which was played in fine, crisp style, just suited to the exercises which were sometimes so delicate that they were soundless, and sometimes so energetic that it was a rush and whirr and whiz of sound that almost appalled you with the majesty of simultaneous motion. The drill of fingers, separately and together, and that of the wrist movement, was fine. The Director was at home in his work and was quiet and self-restrained, using very few words and gestures. While the majority of the children in these schools are poor and some of them "*half-timers*," it was pleasing to find that the better classes are beginning to patronize them on account of their superior excellence. The marching out to their respective rooms, some upstairs to those opening off the large gallery from which we viewed the scene, and some to