

THE LITERARY CLASSES.

Owing to the disturbed condition of the Institution during the first half of the late session and the protracted recess from Christmas to early in February, it was not reasonable to expect that the usual standard of literary progress would have been attained when the session should have drawn to its close. Even in the same class pupils had attended for different periods, and thus were unequally matched with one another. Under these circumstances it was considered best to dispense with the usual annual examinations by specially appointed examiners. I did not recommend this course without much regret, for the visit of the gentlemen usually deputed to discharge this duty is always a pleasant episode in the session's history. And, while the examinations are only to a very limited extent competitive, and their result as to the pupils' standing is simply a factor in our general estimate, the knowledge that educational experts of such large experience are to pass critically through the classes can but have a very stimulating effect on all parties, while their suggestions, either official or informal, are always both acceptable and useful. No one can be more desirous of these annual visits being kept up than the Principal, who is properly held responsible for the general advancement and efficiency of the pupils of the Institution in literary knowledge. I regret too, that, owing to the necessity for discontinuing the examination for one session, the present report loses a feature of much interest. As a means of justly apportioning the annual prizes and deciding promotions, the classes were examined by the Principal and literary teachers, who were of course able to tell how far each class might be fairly supposed to have gone in its particular studies, and while the effects of the disturbing causes above referred to were evident in many cases, it was most gratifying to find what good use had been made, both by teachers and pupils, of the four months during which class work had been uninterrupted. I trust that the necessity for introducing the Kindergarten system for the junior pupils will have been so apparent to the official mind as to ensure its adoption before many months are over. Hitherto, while by ordinary methods the young blind child has been trained to habits of application, and in a more or less crude and accidental fashion has received primary ideas as to shape, form and utility, the teaching has been neither systematic nor scientific. What is wanted in that regard the Kindergarten provides. The infantile ideas are shaped and moulded by an exact process and objectively applied. The hands and wrists—usually the weakest portions of a blind child's physical economy—are strengthened, and a most attractive means of improvement and recreation is provided for the youthful mind. I have already brought the subject to your notice and trust that it may fully commend itself to your judgment.

THE MUSIC CLASSES.

These classes, like those of the literary department, were sensibly affected by the same state of affairs. The ill health, too, of Mr. Knight, the senior music teacher, was an addition to the prevailing difficulties. But we were fortunate in having in our lady teachers those who were fully competent to supply all deficiencies for the time being, and, by slightly reducing the number of music lessons—but without abridging the pupil's time for practice—all were kept under instruction, and our closing concert, I think, must have convinced any one competent to judge, that the standard of efficiency had been well maintained. I must not forget, in this connection, to refer to the hearty co-operation received from our non-resident instructors in vocal music and the violin respectively, Mrs. Dr. Howson and Prof. Baker, whose pupils on all public occasions add by their efforts so much to the pleasure of our visitors and do credit to the attention bestowed upon them. For reasons similar to those mentioned in regard to the literary classes, we had no official examination of the music classes at the close of last session. The plan of inducting our senior music pupils into the art of teaching is being systematically carried on. Three male and three female pupils are regularly engaged as monitorial instructors under the direction of Mr. E. H. Williams and Miss Callaghan respectively. Our stock of pianos

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