

principles and processes, and too little attention is given to the memorising of accurate verbal statements of the principles illustrated. In the books used are given a large number of very simple examples that are intended to be worked by the pupils and teachers in co-operation in such a way as to bring out the principles involved in the slate-work that follows, and the examples are followed by succinct statements of the principles. In many schools the examples are not worked at all, and in few are the statements of principles memorised by the pupils. It would save much time and be a great gain to the pupils if they were. In the senior classes we have not infrequently to penalise for bad methods or entire lack of method even where the answer is correct; for we hold that, from the point of view of education, the answer, though important, is less important than the method by which it has been reached. Whether, for example, it has been reached by a formula that is not understood or by a process of logical thinking is, it seems to us, a matter of great educational importance. It is, of course, not reasonable to expect a child always to use the best method; but it is reasonable to expect him to set out an orderly sequence of work that shall show his conception of the significance and relation of the data of the problem he is asked to solve. If his conception is wrong, his answer will be wrong; but his effort to express his conception in orderly sequence of sound thinking will be of high educational value to him. Every subject should be made to contribute to the child's self-expression.

Geography is, in many schools, too "bookish" to be of much culture-value. It deals for the most part with the unseen—the configuration, climate, industries, products, &c., of countries that lie beyond our personal ken, and that therefore can be realised only in imagination; and our power so to realise them depends on our mental content of concrete experience. Sense-experience is the foundation of imagination, and the richer the experience the greater the power of imagination. It is therefore of primary importance that before entering upon the study of distant countries the child should be taught the significance, and learn to speak and interpret the language, of the features of his own "patch of earth and sky"); for his power to imagine and think of other "patches of earth and sky" is limited by his knowledge of his own. Neglect or partial neglect of this fact is the first defect in our teaching of geography. At the present day there is no lack of other aids to the imaginative realisation of the physical, economic, and social conditions of countries other than our own. The curiosity of man leads him to every corner of the world; with him goes the camera; the tale of the camera is told to the world in the illustrated Press; the Press goes to every home. In Otago, for instance, there are the illustrations of the *Otago Witness*, which are available in considerable number to the teachers and pupils of every school in the district. In every issue there are pictures of "patches of earth and sky" other than that of which the child has personal experience. The intelligent study of these and such as these would add greatly to the child's power of imaginative realisation of descriptive geography. Why not use them for this purpose? Lastly, there is the map, which, though to the un instructed little more than a painted surface, speaks the language of landscape to those who can interpret its signs and conventions. Adequate knowledge of the significance of these is, however, what our pupils too seldom possess.

Drawing is often very good, and there is an increase in the number of schools the pupils of which use it as a mode of expressing what they see in natural objects. Used in this way, it is a fine discipline in observation and self-expression; but used simply as an imitative art it is, we think, not of much educational value. In some schools the time and energy spent in erasing what is done suggests that physical exercise is being brought into correlation with the graphic art.

Handwork now forms an integral part of the work of a considerable number of schools; and great praise is due to the teachers for the efforts they have made, often at no small personal inconvenience, to qualify themselves to give instruction in the new kinds of work prescribed by the Department. Much of the work done in the schools is of creditable quality; and we consider that the cottage-gardening classes, the woodwork classes, and the cookery classes are so far a decided success.

During the year fourteen teachers gained first-class and sixteen second-class certificates in cookery; and a large number of teachers are now preparing for examination in cookery and woodwork. The rooms in which the pupils and teachers have to work are entirely unsuitable. We would therefore urge upon the Board the necessity for proceeding with the erection of the rooms that were designed some time ago.

The methods employed in the teaching of science are improving. Singing is too often wanting in sweetness and taste. Discipline and manners are almost invariably very good. Very few of our country schools are swept and dusted every day, and the condition of the grounds and out-offices is often unsatisfactory. The school furniture and appointments are too frequently abused by those to whom the schoolhouse is let for public or private entertainments. In no case should Committees allow the school floor to be greased for dancing. Great praise is due to some of the Dunedin and suburban Committees for what they have done in providing gymnasiums and in fencing and beautifying the school grounds. They have in these matters set a fine example to other Committees. We wish they would now proceed to set an example in the æsthetics of wall-decoration. The place of honour in this department of education is at present held by a country school; but there the decoration is the work of the teacher.

Standard VII. was represented in ninety-one schools, of which nine are district high schools. The S7 pupils of fifteen of the remaining schools were absent on the day of examination, and those of four of the rest had done only S6 work. The following is our classification of the remainder in respect of this class: Excellent, 1; very good, 3; good, 19; satisfactory, 26; fair, 13; weak, 1.

Fifteen country schools are placed in the group "Good" and two in the group "Very good," and a country school occupies the place of honour, a result that is highly creditable to the teachers of the schools. We have again and again urged that the teaching of S7 work to children to whom the high schools are inaccessible should carry with it the extra payment now given to