

pursued. Programmes should be kept by the teacher showing the subjects and their treatment, a separate list being made of those which have formed themes for written composition, every subject having been, of course, fully treated orally. Mr. Mulgan, we notice, recommends confining the year's attention to one or to a section of one of the three great divisions—the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms—or to natural phenomena. Such restriction would in many cases afford ample scope and naturally lead to closer investigation, but we have to deal with all classes of children of different tastes and opportunities, and even when attending the same school coming from very different localities, and the spirit of inquiry, of noting and reasoning about what is seen, should be encouraged in every possible way, so that a general course is we consider often advisable, though it may with advantage have a bias towards specialising. We would not even discourage spontaneity.

In a district such as this how varied is the field! In one part almost every known mineral is said to have been found—a mountain of iron-ore, seams of coal, limestone caverns, and quartz reefs in full working—all in juxtaposition, parted only it may be by lovely hills or a narrow strip of dairy land. Next comes a rich agricultural valley full of beauties and wonders, where the rivers play hide and seek with the landscape, one vanishing for miles from its bed to reappear again in full flow, another rising from the level plain in one immense spring, ever clear as crystal, and with force and volume enough to move an ironclad. Again, we have a fertile plain beautifully girdled by grazing-hills, the brightest, sunniest spot in "God's own country." It is closely settled and farmed, being noted for its barley, fruit, and hops, the somber hue of the native bush having long since given way to spring's delicate green and autumn's russet and gold. Over the hills in the track of the red deer lies the great mineral belt, with its half-hidden stores of copper and chrome, a line sharply defined through the forest, scorched and barren, a scar on the country's fair brow. Westward, again, is a long narrow valley, on whose rich alluvial flats fruit predominates. There the children count raspberries by the bucket, while their owners reckon them by the ton. Close in the background stand the snow-capped ranges extending away from the bays in a wild panorama of cloud-piercing spires, densely green slopes, foaming rivers, still lakes—the haunt of black swan and shy crested grebe—gorges and cataracts, valleys (smiling but rarely), and rata-clad mountains, till within sight of the unbroken ocean. There the finest coal-fields in the colony stand at dizzy heights that look down upon the stately nikau, the clematis in its white-robed virgin glory veiling hardy birch and weeping rimu, the graceful ponga and the palm-like Indivisa, queen of mountain passes. Nor is there naught but coal below the surface. Beside the rock-bound river all along that toilsome road—begotten before engineers were, the only artery of inland traffic to connect sea with sea, yet in its wild beauty claiming to be the finest coach-drive in the colony—the children are familiar with the sluice claim, the dredge, and the miner searching for gold. On the sea-shore, where nature has been the only road-maker, they frequently see him at the life-wrecking work of beach-combing; while here and there they are being brought up within the very roar of stamper batteries. At the top of one lofty range, in winter deep buried in snow, where even a summer school is not needed, a heap of mullock, slipped from no one knows where, is, when the season permits, being passed *en masse* to the battery; and a few miles away, from a neighbouring hilltop that suns itself above the fog-banks, down 1,300 ft. from the mouth right to sea-level goes in the darkness of intense night a perpendicular shaft, forming the main artery for those twenty-seven miles of drives that constitute the richest quartz-mine in the district and in New Zealand, second only to Waihi in its output. Then, too, many of the wonders of the deep, from the whitebait to the whale, may reveal themselves to the observant eyes of some of our scholars who have never slept away from the rumble of the waves. From the windows of one school seals may be often seen basking on the rocks; on the way to another, the children's footprints cross those of the penguin, and besides hosts of more common water-fowl, that *rara avis*, the tall white crane, may occasionally be seen on the flounder-flats. Again, what a wealth of research we have in another domain of nature's working—in what we might term "geographical observation." The whole of our wild and beautiful coast, hugged and searched by the Maoris of old, is full of interest and variety. The one side has that huge bank of boulders (a bone of contention for both geologists and engineers), stretches of silver and golden sands, beautiful islets and bays in succession (each with its sand-banked lagoon) to end in a sand-guarded sea; the other has an almost harbourless shore, all nature-protected throughout by outlying rocks, from the home of the tuatara (near neighbour of Pelorus Jack) past the seal-clad Steeples to those projecting reefs on which in storm or calm the swell of the open misnamed Pacific ceaselessly dashes in geyser-like spray. Away inland near the centre of the island, at present far removed from any schoolboy's eyes, are our hot springs that, though free from thermal eruptions, should none the less for their healing power be classed among the wonders of creation. Too often may those giant workers, the silent forces of nature, labour unnoticed.

In a world so full of natural wealth and beauty there is much to attract a lad whether from the mine or the farm, the bush or the sea, the town or the orchard, the hilltop or the plain; much to interest and stir the imagination of the future scientist, artist, or poet: for if his destiny be merely the plough, the mine-truck, or the office stool, a scientific bent will always be of good value, and "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." A close and thoughtful study of nature, too, in any of her varied moods can hardly fail to instil a feeling of reverence for the Hand that planned ere the mountains were brought forth or the valleys ran with song.

ARITHMETIC.—We are pleased to record a considerable improvement in this most important subject. The results obtained show that 60 per cent. of the pupils examined in Standards III to VI qualified for promotion, as against 53 per cent. in each of the two previous years. The percentage of individual passes in each of these standards for the last four years (half marks for the purpose of the estimate being taken as a pass in each case) was as follows:—

			Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.
1902	..	..	76	64	51	55
1903	..	..	74	53	37	41
1904	..	..	74	61	32	44
1905	..	..	78	64	54	45