change month by month in position at the same hour of the stars of the Southern Cross is rarely understood, and seems to be seldom explained. For teachers seem to know that the earth turns on its axis (roughly speaking) 366 times a year, or at any rate understand the significance of the fact. The alternation of day and night tells us (roughly speaking) of 365 rotations. This leaves one rotation to be accounted for. It is accounted for by the apparent slow movement of the Southern Cross (and most of the stars in the firmament) in a circle from east to west, once in a year. Every day we are carried by the earth's rotation through a complete circle, and nearly one degree more; but we are quite unconscious of the fact that we are carried through more than the complete circle, so we judge that the stars have moved nearly one degree in the opposite direction, or from east to west. It is the very same false judgment as that which we make when, in a quietly moving steamboat, we judge that the wharf or other stationary object is moving past us in the opposite direction to the vessel's motion. There should be little difficulty in getting Standard VI scholars to follow all this; but it is very rarely that the Inspectors find any indication that the matter is understood. Clear reasons for thinking that the earth's axis is inclined to the plane of its orbit are also seldom given. It must, however, be recognised that a lucid exposition of these complex matters is not an easy task for even the older public-school pupils, and I shall continue to be of opinion that much of the Standard VI geography course might be deleted with great benefit to teachers and to pupils.

I would strongly urge the laying-out, in a suitable corner of the playground of every school, of a level plot (say 6 ft. by 4 ft.) for the construction of model and relief maps, and to illustrate the nature of physical features generally. If this plot were made two or three inches lower than the adjoining ground, or had a watertight wooden border to the height of two or three inches above the same, all coast features could be most clearly demonstrated. The small trays and old blackboards that now do duty in this connection are unsatisfactory makeshifts. A supply of sand or friable soil would also have to be provided. The making of these plots would be a useful piece of manual work for the older pupils of a school.

The geography of Course B is dealt with by reading a descriptive work. It is certain that *very little* knowledge of what was formerly known as political and commercial geography is being gained under the system at present in vogue. Many of the older scholars do not know even the capitals of the countries of Europe, or the great ports of the world. Teachers are quite aware of this, and most are quite content to keep the official machinery going without worrying about the outcome of the process. Every year I am more and more convinced that the whole scheme for teaching Course B Geography is unworkable, and is simply disheartening teachers and children. As I said in last year's report, "Permanent knowledge of the more important facts cannot be gained without much revision, and a much more thorough drilling in the possibly dry facts than the syllabus thinks necessary." It is not what is read, but what is mastered and assimilated, that counts in education.

Teaching of history can hardly be said to exist under the present syllabus arrangements. The intelligent reading of some brief history-book is all that is required, and, as Mr. Purdie remarks, "It is rarely that our pupils or teachers deem it desirable to go at all beyond the requirements." We cannot in any circumstance help to do much more than to interest the young in the story of their country. In all schools the Inspectors will expect to find a full definite syllabus of civic instruction. It is most desirable that this subject should be taught continuously year by year. In the smaller schools changes of teachers make the plan of taking it up only in certain years practically unworkable. There are schools in which it has come to be omitted through this difficulty. Mr. Stewart remarks, very justly, that much of the instruction in health given in our schools is too technical. "The teaching should deal with the simplest and most easily understood, the cheapest and most practicable, means of translating sanitary precept into practice, not losing sight of the fact that it is the positive, not the negative, that must be presented to the scholar. The instruction should centre round the *person* and the *home*, and the aim should be to instil the principles of hygiene relating to these."* He recommends "Laws of Health," by Dr. Carstairs Douglas,† to all teachers both as a guide to school hygiene, and as a model of the kind of teaching required in our schools. Mr. Purdie says the work in health is "generally well done." I have noticed that vaccination, the process of germ infection, and the means of checking the same, are rarely touched on. In several instances single pupils were fairly familiar with these matters, though they had received no instruction in them in school.

In the upper classes of the larger schools, suitable lessons of an illustrative and experimental character are given in elementary science; elsewhere nature-study and elementary agriculture are taken up. In the two latter, accurate notes of observations and of experiments and of practical work must be considered indispensable, and illustrative drawings and sketches should be made. As far as possible these should be the original work of the pupils. It is a good plan to place the notes on the right-hand page, and the sketches with needful explanations on the opposite page. Mr. Grierson remarks that nature-study is not sufficiently practical. "I have little hope of improvement in this matter with the present generation of teachers, who have little idea how to study nature themselves." Mr. Garrard finds nature-study "well taught," and remarks that "teachers are sparing no effort to make the teaching instructive and interesting." Mr. Purdie, while noting considerable improvement in nature-study, considers that school gardening is not proving successful, and Mr. Stewart takes much the same view. "The aim of the school garden," the latter says, "is misunderstood. In a number of cases a small school garden is attached to the school, and, valuable as it is in cultivating a love of flowers, it does not do the work a school garden should. The school garden should be the laboratory in which by experiments the children verify and supple-

* Professor Kenwood, quoted by Mr. Stewart.
† Blackie and Son, 1907; price 3s.