

## THE STANDARD CLASSES.

GEOMETRICAL DRAWING.—There has been a general improvement in the manner in which the geometrical figures are entered in the drawing-books, more care being shown in the arrangement, neatness, and grading of the drawings.

Unfortunately there has not been a corresponding advance made by the pupils in the intelligent grasp of the problems done by them. The teacher should make a point of explaining in a systematic and thorough manner the different steps underlying the construction of the figures the pupils have drawn. If this were done the pupils would be in a position to apply more intelligently what has been taught. But more than this should be done. He should also require the pupils to memorize more thoroughly than is done now the work that should be memorized—for instance, a child in Standard II, after drawing a square in his drawing-book, should be able to tell why it is a square.

In a few schools much greater care should be given to the earlier stages of the work in free-hand drawing. It is obvious that without such care the subsequent work cannot be satisfactory. We find, however, that rarely in the upper standards is the full course in drawing completed.

In Standard V and Standard VI we should like to see a little more practice given in drawing from actual objects. Though in the lower classes, in order to teach care and accuracy, it has been necessary to adhere perhaps somewhat too rigidly to copying conventional forms from the flat, yet it is advisable, especially in the upper standards, to gradually and intelligently introduce drawing from objects themselves in order to cultivate originality and to develop more fully the latent artistic powers of the pupils.

While pointing out the necessity of drawing from natural objects, or nature-drawing, we do not wish to encourage that tendency which exists in some quarters to dispense with drawing from conventional forms—a class of drawing which demands from the pupil both exactness in observation and execution. No teacher can afford to fail to recognize the advantage to be derived from exercises which bring under wholesome discipline both the eye and the hand.

Let us have as much nature-drawing as possible as soon as we have trained the child's senses to readily see the form in a complex model, such as a flower, and have also given his hand the technical skill to express with reasonable accuracy what his trained eyes see.

RECITATION.—We should like to see more progress made in this subject in Standards I and II. As a rule the lines are well known, but delivered with comparatively little expression. Every child can be trained to put a little life and feeling and colour into his recitation. Too many teachers seem to think that as the voice comes by nature, expression also comes in the same way. They forget that a man has nothing in perfection until he has it by culture. The Department requires a teacher to qualify in singing: it seems to us that there is as much need to require him to qualify also in elocution. In the preparatory classes the children are taught action recitations, but when they pass into the standards they are, with very few exceptions, never called upon to make use of appropriate actions when reciting. This is a retrograde step. There is no question that the actions themselves force the child to enter into the spirit of the verse and to express himself with a certain amount of elocutionary effect. The very action calls forth from him some change of the voice in harmony with the gesture. We have frequently remarked that in those schools where the pupils are encouraged to recite with actions we get far more expressive and brighter recitation than we do in schools where training is lacking in this respect. Even if the actions are overdone the exaggeration can be toned down in the upper standards. We would go further, and express the opinion that in a great many of the subjects taught in the lower classes the teacher might with advantage introduce a good deal of exaggeration in order to get the pupils out of the mechanical rut they are so ready to drop into.

COMPOSITION.—Compared with the essay-writing done in Standards II and III, that of Standards V and VI shows an absence of that advancement that might reasonably be looked for. In our opinion the explanation of this is that after the pupils leave Standards III and IV the instruction they receive in this subject is mainly a repetition of what they have had before. This should not be. The treatment should be fuller and more advanced. Frequent model lessons on the principles and construction of an essay and on the various forms of expression should be given.

We are afraid, too, that not a few teachers adopt a policy of drift by giving merely practice in essay-writing and making little or no effort to give regular and systematic lessons in this subject.

WRITING.—As regards writing, the step in advance between Standards V and VI is not sufficiently great; in fact, in many cases there has been a backward movement, the general writing of Standard VI as a rule being less accurately and carefully done than is that of Standard V.

In our opinion this is due mainly to the fact that the teacher of Standard VI tends to rely too much on the practice in writing gained in the course of the ordinary written work. More regular and systematic set lessons should be given, and, moreover, in all of the writing the teachers should insist on a much closer adherence to the style adopted throughout the school and district.

Occasionally when attention has been drawn to the fact that the writing of Standard VI is not in accordance with the system adopted in the rest of the classes we are met with the remark that this departure is purposely allowed, as the teacher thinks that the pupils ought to show some originality in their writing; or, in other words, they should develop character and style. This would be all very well if our experience went to show that the latitude permitted resulted in good penmanship, but this is not the case. The pupils certainly develop an original style, but the least said about it the better.