

*History and Civics.*—While many headmasters have been successful in drawing up schemes of work in history and civics, there is yet, even in the limited time available, much room for improvement in the teaching. Some of the schemes failed to show a suitable correlation with other subjects, more especially with such subjects as geography and literature, with both of which history should go hand-in-hand. It is, however, to be remembered that in the primary schools very little real history can be taught. It is difficult for young children to grasp fully the meaning of the great movements in our history, but if a teacher has succeeded in creating interest and has recognized that his main aim is to make his lessons “an inspiration to conduct,” he will have succeeded to a considerable extent. “The best that history has to give,” says Goethe, “is the enthusiasm that it arouses.” As a rule stories of the great men and women, not only of our nation but of all countries, are not given early enough. Many good reading-books for S1, S2, and S3 are now published, and if these were used as extra readers, and discussions held in the class on the subject of the lessons, interest would be created in the minds of the younger children. Such books as “The New Age Histories,” “Britain and her Neighbours,” and the “Piers Plowman Histories” make very good extra readers for all standards, but especially for the lower standards, and the interest aroused will prepare the way for a better reception of the lessons of the higher standards. The history of New Zealand, too, should not be forgotten. In the upper standards a good text-book should be in the hands of the pupils. Nearly all the schemes we met with were drawn up on the “periodic” method. Teachers who adopt this method should not forget that frequent reference should be made to any earlier events which affect the period dealt with, and that therefore a certain amount of revision of an earlier period is sometimes necessary. Unless a teacher possesses a good knowledge of the relative importance of the great movements of history he will find it very difficult to teach the upper standards by the “concentric” method without creating confusion in the minds of the pupils. A series of reading-lessons (and discussions) in the lower classes on the “concentric” plan might very well precede a series in the upper standards on the “periodic” method, provided the teacher takes care not to crowd the “atmosphere” of his period with too many details. Again, he may make a compromise by covering the whole history in two years in S3 and S4, and then repeating it with more advanced lessons in S5 and S6. This method will enable him to group his classes when he finds he can do so with advantage. As some teachers seem to have difficulty in determining what are the great movements in our history, we wish again to call attention to Professor Pollard’s excellent little “History of England” in the Home University series. In preparing lessons considerable assistance will be obtained from Lay’s “History in Pictures,” Parts I and II, and from his “Pictorial Atlas of the English History,” copies of these should be in every school library.

*Drawing and Handwork.*—There is a general improvement in the drawing in the district, and a marked improvement in the power of teachers to illustrate their lessons. Some of the younger teachers, especially those from the Training College and the drawing classes, show considerable ability in illustrating lessons in such subjects as nature-study, geography, reading, &c. There is still, however, a large number of teachers who fail to make good use of the drawing-lessons. For the benefit of those who cannot avail themselves of the services of Mr. R. Donn, lecturer in drawing, we beg to include in our report a few hints which he kindly forwarded to us for their guidance. Mr. Donn writes:—

“Object-drawing for correctness of observation: In class work it is desirable that two or three large models be placed on stands, in convenient positions for clear and unobstructed observation. The models need not be the same, but must be clearly visible to the child. Large models are more useful for general class work, and small models for class groups or individual work. A teacher need not fear the result of a number of different objects if a good method of ‘building-up’ the drawing is followed. A graded course is advisable, and will assist the teacher to emphasize special points and methods, and obviate the error of giving a complicated object to a junior child. The course might be graded thus: S1 and S2, two dimensions—flat objects; S3, the ellipse—conical and cylindrical objects; S4, continue the ellipse, introduce handles in simple positions, begin the box; S5, box types and compound objects—vases; S6, groups of objects, details of school and large models. When drawing round or box models the levels should be varied so that pupils may realize that position modifies form.

“Illustration and memory drawing for expression of observation and imagination: Crayon should be used. First objects should be chosen for action and detail in clear, interesting stories, as the young child does not observe the relation of foreground and distance. S3 might occasionally have a subject with distance, but as yet the child is not able to realize the full effect of perspective on relative sizes. Up to this stage the drawings are decorative rather than realistic. S4, S5, and S6 may attempt any subject which gives a clear, pictorial image, and the pupils should be encouraged to observe their daily surroundings and any pictures which will assist them to express their thoughts clearly. The drawings should be placed within a rectangle. Memory and observation drawings of single figures, tree forms, animals, houses, &c., might be done at any time and used later to build up illustrations.

“Design and ruler work, for the expression of the decorative instinct: In the first three standards a foundation should be laid by a careful course of ruler drawing for correct drawing, measuring and joining of parts, and the construction and division of useful figures. The simple elements of repetition and series in geometric pattern can be shown. On this foundation should be built a free course of design leading to practical design in S6. The elements for design need not be ‘naturalistic-floral,’ but may be geometric or very ‘conventional-floral.’ Too often design begins with a filling for a square and continues with a series of similar exercises until the end. Design for a special purpose and the use of colour with observation of designs seen in daily life should be combined in all exercises.

“In all branches of drawing a thoughtful, observant, and free drawing will give a better educational result than a mechanically laboured effort.”

*Handwork.*—In the majority of the schools this subject is being taught in accordance with the spirit of the syllabus, and good progress is made. But it is to be feared that in some cases teachers treat the subject rather from a vocational than from an educational point of view. “The teacher’s scheme of work should show clearly what educational purpose is intended to be served by each form of handwork undertaken, as well as the relationship which this work bears to other work done by the pupils in reading, composition, history, geography, arithmetic, or nature-study.” If handwork as a means