

It is, as a rule, neatly set out : the use of a column on the left or right of the page, instead of scraps of paper, for detailed calculations is fairly well established. Teachers have recognized that clearness of arrangement is conducive to clearness of thinking. The setting forth of a problem might well be regarded as an exercise in clear and orderly English.

*Geography* is, in general, a well-taught subject, but a surprising number of teachers do not recognize that it should be taught on a scientific basis, for there is still a good deal of work done that is the mere memorizing of unrelated facts. The ready access that teachers and scholars have to text-books written in good literary style should have a beneficial influence. Comparatively little practical work is done, and such maps as the pupils make are seldom designed to illustrate important geographical truths. The political map is good, but maps showing elevation, rainfall, products, density of population, means of communication, &c., should be constructed, and the close inter-relation of these things should be noted. Even in Standards III and IV a beginning on these lines might be made in connection with the study of New Zealand. In Standards V and VI similar maps would show the close relationship existing between geographical facts and historical movements and incidents. The schemes of work in this subject are often drawn up with little intelligence and skill : a definite portion of world geography is taken each year, but provision is seldom made for revising the preceding year's work. As a result, it is frequently found that the pupils in Standard VI have but a meagre knowledge of New Zealand and Australian geography.

*History* is a disappointing but improving subject. In the best schools good progress is made but in too large a number the pupils' knowledge is meagre and uncertain. There is a lack of vigorous oral instruction ; but even where the oral lesson is given teachers frequently fail to supplement it by allowing the pupils to read from a suitable text-book. Complete and full oral answers are not asked for as often as they should be ; in testing their classes a number of teachers ask too many questions, and thus unintentionally supply information which should come from the pupils. We should like to see more attention paid to the history of the Dominion, and to world history in relation to it. The teaching of civics is too often dry and uninteresting, and consists in the memorizing of certain facts that are often quite unintelligible to the pupils. To lecture on this subject to children of from eleven to fourteen is often futile, and is certain evidence that the lecturer knows little of child psychology. The only really effective way to treat much of this work is by dramatization. It is to be regretted, too, that in many schools little notice is taken of current events—of history and geography in the making. Much may be learned per medium of a pair of scissors applied to the daily newspapers. Notwithstanding the adverse criticism written herein, we are of opinion that history has received more attention during the past year than it did formerly, and that the general level of attainment is higher than in previous years.

*Drawing and Handwork.*—In very few schools can it be said that drawing is good, or even satisfactory. In general, the instruction is not skilful, the objects are not well chosen or carefully graded, and the pupils' work is often of poor quality in respect to proportion, quality of line, finish, and general attractiveness. No other subject in the curriculum is so calculated to develop good taste ; yet even in otherwise good schools much of the drawing is very crude, and destitute of any artistic value. The scope of the treatment is too limited ; little opportunity is afforded the child of expressing its own view of what it sees. Still more infrequently does one find a pupil being allowed to develop his natural bent. If a boy shows bent as a comic artist, a cartoonist, a landscape-painter, or a designer (e.g., of linoleum or wall-paper patterns), why should he be denied the exercise of his art ? An art training does not consist simply in drawing in outline a bucket or a broom. Some formal instruction there must be, but it should not, as it is at present, be restrictive ; it should be imparted to teach the principles underlying the art. If true education consists in revealing to the pupil the powers that lie latent within him and encouraging the development of these powers, then the teaching of drawing must be considered at the present ineffective. There seems also to be an inclination to neglect simple geometrical and instrumental drawing. Many children in Standard VI are quite ignorant of the meaning of such common terms as vertical, horizontal, and oblique lines, isosceles triangle, &c. The "plan and elevation" question set in the synchronous Proficiency Examination was apparently new to many. The liberal use of colour in geometrical drawing, and the practical application of the subject to design and handwork, would much enhance its popularity and effectiveness. Handwork that is really educational is not a popular subject. It is a rare experience to find a country teacher teaching woodwork, and yet country boys would derive invaluable benefit from a good course of instruction in this subject.

*Nature-study.*—The instruction in this subject depends for its success upon the enthusiasm of the teacher, and naturalists in the service are very rare. So, too, is interesting work. The seasons, the parts of a plant, the dispersal of seeds, and suchlike topics form the scheme in most schools for primers, Standards I and II, and sometimes for Standards III and IV also. The same topics are dealt with for two or three years, and must become very stale to the children. Nature-study in its wider and more interesting aspects is not touched. The birds of the district, their names, plumage, cries, nests, and habits ; the trees, the wild flowers, the weeds, and the insects do not receive due attention. A few schools, in charge of enthusiastic teachers, are working on good lines, and the pupils have made "discoveries" that are of great interest. The agricultural instructors might with advantage issue notes to teachers suggesting lines of study, and giving advice to those who are willing to do field-work but who are uncertain of the best means of carrying it out. Teachers might well read to their pupils nature stories written for children by keen naturalists. There are many books containing suitable stories that should find a place in the school library. Such would lead to more first-hand study than the usual school-room presentation of a nature-study topic.