

done, and a carefully written memorandum of it should be taken home by each child, and, lastly, the work should be clearly corrected, and the corrections understood by the pupil. Home-lessons may be composition exercises on familiar subjects, sums in back-work only, learning arithmetical tables, or rules of grammar which have been thoroughly explained in class, a small outline map showing half-a-dozen names of places, on which a lesson has been previously given, the preparation, by means of a given vocabulary of a short reading-lesson, or the learning of a verse or two of poetry. Home-work should not be the copying of full maps from atlases, problems in arithmetic, learning by heart geography history, or grammar from text-books, or preparing any class-lesson other than reading.

Since writing the above suggestions, which are for the most a summary of what has been said from time to time in the several schools, I have read in the Home papers a letter, of the 14th of November last, from the British Education Department to the National Union of Elementary Teachers, in which similar views are thus expressed: "In regard to home-lessons, my Lords see no reason to modify the view which has already been expressed. For delicate or very young children such lessons are plainly unsuitable, and the special circumstances of some schools render it inexpedient to require home tasks in any form. But in the upper classes of good schools, in which the teachers exert a right influence and take an interest in their work, the practice of giving short exercises to be performed at home is attended with no difficulty, and is open to no practical objection. The best teachers use such exercises rather to illustrate and to fix in the memory lessons which have already been explained in school than to break new ground, or to call for new mental effort. This purpose is served by lessons of a very simple and definite character—a sum, a verse of poetry, a list of names or dates, a letter, an outline map, a short parsing exercise, which may readily be prepared in half-an-hour, and which admits of very easy testing and correction on the following day. When these conditions are fulfilled, the home task is found to have a very valuable effect, not only in helping the progress of the scholar, and in encouraging the habit of application, but also in awakening, on the part of the parents, an interest in the school work."

NEEDLEWORK AND ARITHMETIC FOR GIRLS.—Rather more work is at present required of girls than of boys, in that the girls give up a portion of their time to needlework, and it is desirable that this time should be rather increased than diminished. Then, again, the arithmetic required in each standard is more difficult mental work for girls than it is for boys, and there are physical reasons why the strain put upon girls should be less than that put upon boys. As arithmetic is a subject less necessary in after-life for girls than for boys, I think it will be advisable in future to set easier papers in that subject specially for girls. To do so will add to the labour of examination but it will be a boon to many girls and their teachers, who find it, under the circumstances, difficult to satisfy present examination requirements in arithmetic. I shall not, however, allow girls taught by a mistress to take the easier arithmetic paper unless the needlework taught is satisfactory. I say this, because, at present, the sewing of two of the six city schools, and that of three of the ten district town schools, would not be considered satisfactory.

NORMAL SCHOOL.—I have, this year given more time than formerly to the inspection of the Normal School, and conducted examinations—chiefly orally—on most of the subjects of study. The examinations were held on Thursday and Friday the last days of August. Eighteen female students were present in class, two others were engaged in the practising school, and one male student was doing temporary work in a country school. The work taken on Thursday was oral examination in English grammar, analysis and word-knowledge, and examination on the black-board in involved fractions, discount, and mensuration. Speaking generally, the answers were numerous and intelligent, and showed a fair comprehension and extended knowledge of the work taken up. Clearly, the class, as a whole, was stronger than those of previous years. During the day the science master gave a useful lecture on heat, and the drawing master took a class of eighteen students in perspective drawing, giving clear instruction with diagrams. On Friday I again examined orally and rather closely on the geography of the east coast of England, on the political geography of France, and on one or two branches of physical geography. I also gave a short paper on history, and examined the D students on the black-board in elementary algebra, and in Euclid, Book I., taking principally Propositions v and xxxii. Afterwards a model lesson was given by one of the students, and a few criticisms made thereon. I took note of the time-table and the work covered by the teaching of Mr. Howard, the Normal master, and of Mrs. Griffin, the Normal mistress, also I have lately read many of the lectures prepared for her classes by the latter. I am satisfied with the extent of the programme and the character of the instruction, and from an inspection of the exercise-books of the students in arithmetic, history, grammar, domestic economy, science, and physical geography, I should infer that the pupils had been diligent and careful in their work.

I was much pleased with the cheerful tone and gentle manners of the students. The Normal mistress was advised to have specimens of needlework prepared for presentation at the annual certificate examination, to supplement the work required to be done in the room, and I was lately informed by the examiner that some very creditable work was shown. During the past year I have seen at work three or four teachers who have been trained in the Wellington Normal School, two in charge of country schools, and one or two acting as assistants in large schools and I can testify that they are painstaking and methodical, their schools or rooms are well appointed, the time-tables are satisfactory, and, in some cases at least, they are careful to prepare the work of the day beforehand—an important point in a really successful teacher.

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The Chairman, Education Board.

ROBERT LEE, Inspector.