

To teachers who care for history, the freedom in the choice of subjects of study accorded by the new syllabus should be very welcome. But there are not so many who do care for history, or know it well enough to make their treatment of the chosen twenty-five persons or events very interesting or instructive. In the great majority of cases the teaching of the subject has followed the lines of the book read, and few have seriously attempted to give a picture in outline of even the greatest personages in the history of England. It appears to us that this is sometimes due to want of adequate knowledge. To those who desire a fuller knowledge of the history of England than the necessarily brief and all too political text-books used in the schools supply, we would recommend the excellent text-book of English history by Mr. Osmond Airy, published a year or two ago by Longmans and Co. Every teacher should have books of this kind at hand from which to draw inspiration and information too. Wisely used, the lines of historical teaching laid down in the new syllabus would make the subject attractive as well as instructive to children, and we hope that an earnest effort will be more generally made to attain this end. Teaching about a prominent historical personage that is exhausted by two or three questions given by the teacher himself is not likely to minister much to information, or to fostering a taste for biographical and historical reading, which ought to be one of the teacher's chief aims in his handling of this subject.

We generally look through the school exercise-books at the time of inspection, and in the majority of the schools they are well kept and neatly and carefully written. These exercises are in such cases an important aid to writing. There are not wanting, however, schools in which the work in exercise-books is positively discreditable and a serious hindrance to progress in writing. Occasionally we have found the correction of the work in exercise-books much neglected; and it is very doubtful if the corrections made with so much pains and perseverance by most teachers are to any considerable extent helpful to their pupils. If the errors were marked or underlined by the teacher, and corrections were then made by the pupil to the best of his knowledge, the exercises would be much more profitable.

It is some years since the arrangement of the science course was left largely in the hands of teachers, with a direction that a three years' course of lessons should be made out and followed. In a good number of schools a suitable three years' course has been arranged, but in many it is still a desideratum. The subject is well taught in a few schools, moderately in a considerable number, and in the rest, for the most part, poorly, without enthusiasm and insight, and too often without adequate knowledge. But it must be recognised that worthy instruction in science demands much more time than can at present be allowed for it—at any rate, in the smaller schools. More time could be found for it if history were made a reading-subject only.

The other subjects of instruction receive, for the most part, adequate attention, and do not call for special comment.

Owing to the enthusiasm with which the "Arbor-day" movement has been taken up, a good many young trees have been planted in the school-grounds in most rural districts, and, as they have been nursed through the summer with some care, many should grow up to give beauty to the school-grounds and shelter to the scholars of the future. Many of the School Committees have shown a lively interest in this matter.

We have, &c.,

D. PETRIE,
W. TAYLOR, } Inspectors.
P. GOYEN, }

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

SOUTHLAND.

Education Office, Invercargill, 7th March, 1893.

SIR,—

We have the honour to present our general report for the year ended the 31st December, 1892.

At the close of the year 120 schools were in operation, 119 of which were examined, and 117 inspected. The examination-results for the whole district are summarised in the following table:—

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR WHOLE DISTRICT.

Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI. ...	102	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	382	13	15	36	318	14 2
" V. ...	742	15	30	161	536	13 4
" IV. ...	1,073	32	79	258	704	12 5
" III. ...	1,335	47	79	267	942	11 5
" II. ...	1,147	32	24	63	1,028	10 3
" I. ...	1,292	25	32	42	1,193	9 2
Preparatory ...	2,980	...	...	...	...	...
Totals ...	9,053	164	259	827	4,721	11 9.5*

* Mean of average age.

On the information contained in the above table we do not deem it necessary to comment at length. It is worthy of note, however, that, whereas the total roll-number as compared with that