

results are that much valuable time is wasted, that, to eke out the programme, details of very doubtful historical or moral value are introduced, and that the children acquire a distaste for the subject. The course is not much improved by the addition of some information about Columba or Black Agnes. I might, were it worth while, justify these criticisms in detail by excerpts from blue-books or from my own experience. The usual treatment of geography at this stage is open to similar criticism.

The truth is that at this stage of the school we have not yet arrived at the point where the separate subjects of oral instruction may be usefully differentiated from each other and separately treated. They might all be replaced by *one single course* of oral instruction, which would be in the main a continuation of the object-lessons of the infant-school, but which might include a certain proportion of lessons on historical or geographical subjects, to be treated after the manner of object-lessons. For these special lessons some natural features of the district, or some scenes of historical interest in the neighbourhood, might be selected as points of departure. A few introductory lessons in grammar might be included, but language-teaching at this stage would probably be better promoted by utilising the object or historical lessons already referred to as material for the practice of oral and occasionally of written composition. The time thus gained, to say nothing of the freedom from distraction, would leave ample room for such amount of manual training as might be found desirable and also for physical drill, and would probably allow of further progress being made in standard work. At present the difference in the requirements in standard subjects in Standards I. and II. scarcely represents a year's work.

In the higher standards the case is not so simple. These standards, especially Standard V., have their own share in the distribution of elementary work over the different standards, and it is on them that the brunt of the real teaching of class-subjects must fall. Not much relief is to be had by attempting to anticipate this part of the work in the lower standards, because so much of what has to be taught makes demand upon the intelligence which cannot reasonably be made at an earlier age. Then, too, in the schools which attempt to do some secondary work some beginning of specific subjects must be made even as early, perhaps, as the Fourth Standard. Clearly the utmost caution must be exercised in introducing an additional subject.

But there are some considerations on the other side. First and most important is the fact, to which I have already alluded, of the rise in age at which Standard V. is being taken. Twelve is rapidly becoming the regular age for presentation in this standard, and there is good reason to believe that in a few years about half the children presented in V. will be over thirteen years of age. If, then, children of twelve and thirteen profess the work in standard subjects which in former years was professed by the majority of children at eleven, there is room not only for greater thoroughness of attainment, but also for a wider range of work in the school curriculum. Then, again, the addition of some form of manual training to the school curriculum may be regarded rather as a relief from than as an addition to the mental work caused by other school studies. On the measure of success which has attended the introduction of manual training so far I cannot in the meantime lay stress, because possibly the experiment has not been sufficiently general or long continued. But it is a fact that in many schools, under present conditions, the girls take all the work that the boys take, and give besides a considerable amount of time to sewing and to cookery. The addition of manual work for the boys would in these cases only counterbalance the extra work of the girls. The only question is whether equality should not rather be brought about by reducing the amount of work for the girls. It is much to be wished that this question of the amount and proper distribution of class-subject instruction were more generally looked at from some other point of view than that of ascertaining the best paying combination. Certainly three class-subjects, besides extras, are often run abreast for the sake of extra grants, when every consideration of educational policy would have suggested that two only should be taken.

The amount of class-subject instruction in the higher standards, and the particular subjects taken up, must in any case depend to some extent on the circumstances of the school and the tastes of the teacher, but I may perhaps venture to suggest the following arrangement as a desirable one in ordinary circumstances:—

That two class-subjects only—viz., English and geography—should be formally professed, and of these two English should receive even a greater proportion of time than at present. That one of the reading-books in use in the class should be a thoroughly readable history *not* arranged with a view to preparing for examinations. The first requisite is that it should engage the interest of the children. To systematize and confirm their knowledge of the facts the children should be asked from time to time to make *for themselves* a summary or digest of certain portions of the book, to be corrected or improved by the help of the teacher. In no case should they be provided with a ready-made analysis to be committed to memory. That manual work—cardboard or woodwork—should be taught to the boys in connection with drawing largely in the time that the girls give to needlework. This combined subject might be made the means incidentally of some elementary instruction in geometry, and in the application of the pupils' knowledge of arithmetic to simple problems of mensuration. If drawing is taught to girls it should be partly in the time at present given to needlework. That as a subsidiary subject, to be taken up more or less fully according to the time available, a series of lessons should be given on facts of observation and experiment. These lessons should not be directed, purposely at all events, towards increasing the pupils' store of examinable knowledge, but should be in the very strictest sense a training in accurate observation, accurate expression, and correct reasoning.

Under this scheme history would require little extra time beyond that allotted to the reading-lesson, and history- and object-lessons together would probably not require nearly the whole of the time at present given to a third-class subject. The educational result would, I think, be at least as satisfactory, and there would be time for any reasonable development of manual training.

The difficulty in the way of manual training on the score of expense of equipment I need hardly discuss. The expense, except in the case of woodwork, is trifling; and even in the case of