

ment the knowledge of plant-life given in the school-room. The results there obtained will be by far the most valuable part of the instruction. In most of the smaller country schools the garden is either conspicuous by its absence, or else it is in a neglected condition. "The School Garden," by J. E. Hennessey (Blackie and Son, 1s.), is an excellent little manual that would be of great assistance to teachers taking up this subject. In every case drawing should be correlated with nature-study. The greatest mistake made by the majority of teachers is attempting to cover too much ground. In endeavouring to overtake the work planned they abandon the observational method, which gives the subject its real value."

Both in nature-study and in Course A geography, occasional outdoor excursions are indispensable. They are best taken during the afternoon, and the two objects might be to a large extent combined. In both, the teacher's notes of lessons should in all cases show not only the matter but also the method of the lessons.

Physical culture receives considerable attention in all the larger schools, and in many of the smaller also. In the latter breathing exercises are being more widely practised, and in general a few minutes' exercise is taken at the morning assembly. Where military drill is taken it is generally satisfactory, and is frequently good. Cadet companies are now formed at most schools where the numbers are sufficient, and they are doing very creditable work. This movement has proved a decided help to school discipline.

In the school time-tables very liberal provision is still made for teaching arithmetic, five hours a week being very commonly allowed for it. In a few cases four and a half hours have proved sufficient, and this should be enough in the upper classes of all the larger schools. In many cases transcription and dictation and spelling usurp too much of the time in the higher classes. Many teachers give two hours a week, and some give more, to dictation and spelling, while others teach them quite as efficiently in an hour and a half. In spelling, in writing, and in composition also, careful supervision of every exercise into which they enter saves much special instruction.

Schemes of work to meet the requirements of Regulation 5 have been prepared for most schools during the year. This is a matter of great importance, and it will call for a good deal of revision and alteration in the light of experience to get satisfactory schemes arranged. In many cases they are not drawn out in sufficient detail. To facilitate the examination of their contents the work of each class in each subject for the consecutive periods of a year is best placed together—e.g., the science course for the year would be set out in suitable sections which follow each other without break or the interposition of other matter between the sections. The correlation of subjects needs to be more clearly indicated. The principle of correlation is not being as fully applied as is desirable. Mr. Purdie notes that "The extent to which correlation may be carried out has not often been fully understood or sufficiently studied." One of the finest helps in his work that a teacher can have is thus turned to little account.

The work of the Primer classes is naturally most efficient in the larger schools, where it is often directed by skilful and enthusiastic teachers possessed of special qualifications. In the smaller schools, as mentioned above, the course of reading might well be more extensive and also more carefully graduated. If weekly revision is carried out there should be no occasion for going through any of the reading-books twice over. Spelling is here largely taught by word-building. There is no need to require the pupils to learn the spelling of all the words in the reading lessons. Difficult words omitted might be marked by underlining them in the teacher's copy of the reading-books. In a number of cases I have found that the teachers had no copy of these books. The teaching of number at this stage is in general satisfactory, but it does not improve much. Counters need to be more generally used for silent and desk exercises, as well as during teaching lessons when dealing with numbers under twenty. In the earlier stages all results should be made out by manipulating the counters, after which the result can be recorded on the slate, if it is a silent desk exercise.

Mr. Purdie emphasizes the importance of "continuity of work" among the pupils of the smaller schools. This, as he says, is to be secured only by previous detailed preparation of work, and by a systematic use of the blackboard in setting it out. "The lack of continuity of occupation of pupils is the most serious fault in the management of our small schools—by far the most numerous in the district." Where Primer pupils cannot be kept continuously employed and interested, it will be better to give them extra time for play than to let them acquire the habit of dawdling in school.

Certain kindergarten exercises form a prominent feature in the training of the younger pupils. Paper-folding is very commonly taught, and the manipulation is very satisfactory, but it is seldom sufficiently correlated with drawing, which should be its invariable complement, and it is turned to little account for giving practice in oral expression.

In many country districts the work of the school is greatly retarded by want of punctuality of attendance. If a pupil turns up within an hour and a half of either opening of the school he is reckoned to be present. This means that a pupil, who is credited with being present for a day, may be away for about three hours out of five. This arrangement is most undesirable, and loudly calls for amendment. Mr. Stewart, who has paid special attention to this, says that in quite a number of cases he has seen pupils reach school as late as 10.45 a.m. A good deal of the backward work of some country schools is traceable to this difficulty.

In our schools there is very good order. The discipline, which includes habits of application, is generally good, and in very few schools is it unsatisfactory. A willing, frequently an earnest, spirit of work is displayed; and serious inattention is exceptional. Smartness in work—an important point in discipline—is less commonly met with, and needs to be carefully fostered. Readiness and freedom in oral answering—one of the several indirect tests of discipline—are still relatively infrequent. Many teachers do not grasp their importance as an index to the efficiency of the control of their classes.