

school. We say this advisedly, for after making due allowance for the very natural reticence of the child in the presence of strangers, we find much the same relationship (so far as question and answer are concerned) existing between pupil and teacher. It is pedantic, if not ridiculous, to insist on a formal sentence every time a child answers a simple question, but there is a great difference between this and a sympathetic insistence on his expressing his opinions at reasonable length. The Inspector-General, in his valuable report on "Education in Europe and America," refers at some length to this point, and we commend his remarks to the special notice of our teachers.

ARITHMETIC is now receiving a more reasonable allocation of time on the time-table, though we cannot say that the requirements, judging from the test-cards issued by the Department, more particularly in S5, conform, as we think they should do, to the altered conditions. The test-cards give little encouragement to the children to place less reliance on the arithmetic-book, and more (in both mental and written arithmetic) on work based on matters connected with local industries, local markets, the school-garden, or the workshop. The home-made example is probably much more within the comprehension of the child, and it has the further advantage of possessing a living interest the book example will never have.

GEOGRAPHY.—The B course in geography is, on the whole, well treated, and so far as place-names are concerned, we find comparatively little to justify the criticism that boys are leaving school without knowing anything about the great and important geographical names of the world. The majority of teachers are now using a wider discretion in the selection of topics from the A geography course, with the result that much more satisfactory work is being done, but the very definite intention of the syllabus in the matter of personal observation is not receiving the attention it deserves. We are decidedly of opinion that no text-book in geography is required, except in so far as pupils may be induced to go to it for further information on subjects already dealt with in class. The money spent on such "geographical" labour-saving machinery would be better spent in providing good books of reference and books of travel. In many schools pictures are used systematically with the very best results. It should be borne in mind, however, that a child must be trained to interpret a picture just as he is trained to interpret the signs and symbols of arithmetic. The very young child's delight in the picture of a horse or a train is in large measure the result of many lessons (probably unconscious ones) received at his mother's knee. The S6 pupil must have some such apperceptive preparation before he can get the best from a picture of a cathedral or a glacier.

ELEMENTARY AGRICULTURE.—Not including small country schools, whose numbers are too small to earn capitation, there are forty-six schools holding recognized classes in elementary agriculture. On each of these Mr. Davies or Mr. Cumming has reported in terms that show increasing interest in the subject and a more intelligent grasp of the aims of this important development of school work. Two points that merit special attention are referred to by the instructors—(1) the necessity for more definite and systematic schemes, which will as far as possible unify the work from the P. classes to S6, and wherever practicable lead up to the rural course in the district high schools; (2) the garden operations in practically every case earn a much higher mark than the corresponding indoor work. Teachers require continual reminder that the garden, if not made an integral part of the school as a whole, is losing the larger part of its educational value. Many eminent authorities contend that the whole work of a rural school should centre round the garden. While recognizing the limitations that may prevent the realization of this condition of affairs, we feel that it is an ideal we may well strive to attain. Every operation in the garden is an experiment, and as such should lead to close observation on the spot. Facts noted provide material for discussion inside the school, and it should not be difficult to give such discussion a practical bearing on the composition, arithmetic, geography, handwork, and drawing. In its highest sense all nature-study is a "spirit infusing one's attitude of mind," not a "watertight compartment of knowledge." Complaints about an overburdened syllabus have their origin in large measure in this latter point of view.

In view of the fact that the new rural course is now established in practically all our district high schools, we look to our teachers so to shape their schemes of work as to obviate as far as possible any break in the continuity of the pupil's progress. Much may be done materially to assist secondary work by keeping this point in view. In connection with this matter, we can recommend strongly a course in elementary physical measurements which, following on the nature-study of the lower standards, will fit in harmoniously with the arithmetic, drawing, and A geography; and, in fact, may be made to cover the entire ground of instrumental drawing, mensuration, and physical geography, and also to form the best introduction to the science and geometry of the secondary schools.

DRAWING AND HANDWORK.—There is a steady advance in drawing and handwork. In a few schools—mainly country schools—instrumental drawing is not receiving sufficient attention, and in nearly all schools object-drawing still leaves room for improvement. The aims of drawing in our schools appear to us to be—(1) A manual training in mechanical accuracy and neatness; (2) an æsthetic training in colour and proportion of form; (3) a mental training in expression based on observation. No teacher is likely to overlook the first two—it is the third and most important that is likely to be neglected. For this reason we feel that simple object-drawing is not yet receiving the attention it should. We do not look for an artist's representation, or even for a rigid conformity to all the complications of formal perspective, but we do expect the pupil to see that a hoop looked at obliquely is an ellipse, not a circle. Too much use is made of the flat copy, and, while the ideal plan of using no copies at all may in many cases be difficult to follow, the desirability of minimizing their use should be kept in mind. The treatment of brush drawing as a part of the whole scheme of drawing, in which the use of a brush as a real drawing-instrument is thoroughly recognized, is gradually replacing the old course in which