

be childish. A poem which requires no thought does not stimulate the intelligence. "It is well for young children to have their memories stored with poems that do not lose their sweetness and charm, but, as the mind develops, display a more inward beauty and fresh traits of interest." With the recent adoption of new readers for the higher classes, fresh material will be readily available to take the place of the hackneyed selections that have done duty for so many years—a change that will be gladly welcomed by all concerned.

ARITHMETIC.—In this subject the general attainment is satisfactory, and frequently very good. The tests set by the Department for the examination for proficiency certificates were, on the whole, well answered, and the importance of preliminary practice in mental exercises has been more generally recognized. In the lower classes of some schools we should welcome a more ready and accurate knowledge of the memory-work indispensable as a foundation on which to base sound progress. What may be designated the "mechanical part" of mental work can only become automatic by constant and frequent practice.

GEOGRAPHY.—Improved methods of teaching this subject have come into more general use. While, as a rule, Course A has received its fair share of attention, a better acquaintance is shown with the political and commercial aspects of geography. The intelligent employment of Geographical Readers supplementary to direct instruction has been put to good purpose.

HISTORY.—An improvement in the teaching of history may be looked for from the study of the attractive series of Historical Readers recently supplied to our schools. The judicious use of the book prescribed for the highest class should serve to correct the apparent detachment of the various lessons and the frequent want of continuity and connection in the schemes of work, a feature of weakness to which reference was made in our last annual report. Lessons on the duties of citizenship are, on the whole, well treated.

DRAWING AND HANDWORK.—Due provision for the teaching of these subjects has been made in the school time-tables, and the treatment more closely accords with modern demands. In some schools a feature referred to in our report for last year still demands close attention—viz., the need of keeping a definite aim in view, and of preparing a varied and carefully graduated scheme of exercises as a means for carefully developing and systematizing the course of instruction. In the larger schools much of what may be regarded as industrial drawing is done in connection with the woodwork classes. Manual occupations of various kinds form a prominent and popular feature of the instruction given in the lower and preparatory classes, and by the more successful teachers have been successfully co-ordinated with the older subjects of the syllabus.

NATURE-STUDY AND AGRICULTURE.—In many quarters much intelligent interest has been shown in the teaching of nature-study. The active co-operation of the pupils has been successfully appealed to, and the course of lessons has been planned to harmonize with the ever open book of nature, as illustrated by the surroundings of the school and local conditions. There are still a few survivals of unprofitable lessons copied direct from useless and obsolete books of notes that might be consigned to the waste-paper basket.

Instruction in elementary agriculture in the higher classes comes as a natural development of nature-study in the lower portion of the school. Those teachers who have realized the aim skilfully and clearly set before them by Mr. Malcolm, the Board's instructor, succeed in making agriculture a truly educative subject by the intelligent combination of lessons on the principle of tillage, with practical and experimental work in the school-garden. It is gratifying to record the hearty support extended to this movement by the parents in several localities, though in one or two unexpected quarters the proposal to establish school-gardens is treated with apathy, if not met with opposition. A need of praise is due to those teachers in sole charge who have shown an active interest in this branch of instruction, and whose school-gardens, besides being of educational value, form attractive features of the school environment.

SINGING.—At many of the schools, on the occasions of our visits, suitable songs are creditably rendered. The usual singing-lesson consists of a few simple exercises, followed by some easy songs sung generally in unison, occasionally in two parts. It may be fairly expected that in schools where the teachers are qualified for the task, exercises may be included for the purpose of training the ear, and others for the cultivation of the voice. We feel that much use might be made of bright and cheerful songs as a restful change between lessons. Most children sing naturally, and feel a real pleasure in singing, and any effort expended in developing their musical tastes will be wisely and profitably employed.

HEALTH.—In most of our larger schools provision is made for direct instruction under this heading. In the smaller schools attention is directed to its more important aspects incidentally as opportunities offer. Valuable lessons in the *School Journal* have afforded much assistance in this direction. In a few schemes the course of lessons submitted has included elementary instruction in first aid. Physical exercises are most successfully taught when they form part of the daily routine.

NEEDLEWORK.—Practically all the girls in the public schools receive instruction in this important branch of the domestic arts. The success of teaching depends to a large extent on the accomplishments of the teacher. The general attainment is satisfactory, and in several schools good, more especially in those districts where a healthy local interest is aroused.

GENERAL.—In compiling a summary of the classification results the work of the Inspectors was delayed owing to the scant attention paid by a few individuals to the request for a prompt reply, a few belated returns coming to hand some weeks later, in response to a second circular. While on this matter we may refer to the duty imperative on all members of the teaching service of making themselves thoroughly familiar with the regulations affecting their work. It should not be necessary to apply to the Board for information contained in papers or circulars that at the time are in the possession of the teacher.

We would strongly emphasize the impetus given to professional enthusiasm by the exchange of school visits, more especially in the case of inexperienced teachers in isolated schools. It is in