

*Recitation.*—This subject ranges from excellent in our best schools to very poor in a few. It is unfortunate that in the attempt to carry out the wording of the syllabus as regards quantity, quality should in so many cases be neglected. To memorize a piece merely for the sake of conforming to regulations is not only valueless, but is pernicious in its tendency. Both teacher and pupils must feel the inner beauty and the inspiration of the poetry selected. Treated as an organic whole with appreciative interest, the committing of the lines to memory should be a labour of love, and the recitation period looked forward to as one of the most enjoyable in the school week, and not, as in so many cases, with shrinking and distaste. A child's natural instincts are towards poetry, but the choice of material should be good, and teaching sympathetic and inspiring. In choice of material there is no limit, and although there are a few teachers who slavishly adhere to the pieces in their reading-book, the majority exercise a wise discretion, laying under contribution the masterpieces of our great poets.

*Arithmetic.*—The satisfactory level of recent years was generally maintained, although Standard V displayed considerable weakness. Standard VI candidates, on the whole, were remarkably successful in dealing with departmental tests. We were disappointed with the results of questions which were set to test the pupils' knowledge of shorter methods, and the answering in mental arithmetic fell so far short of expectations that we are convinced that the attention paid to this subject is not commensurate with its claims. Frequent mental exercises and employment of shorter methods would save time, and increase accuracy by dispensing with the fruitful sources of error—minute mechanical processes. How to read a question so as to ascertain what the approximate answer will be should receive greater consideration, for answers are often so absurdly incorrect that there is every indication that the pupil had no idea as to the amount and nature of the result. It is pleasing to record that the treatment given to numbers in the lower classes is very satisfactory, but we would again emphasize our often-expressed opinion that revision, drill, and graphic treatment cannot be overdone. Thoroughness at every step should be our constant aim.

*Geography.*—The treatment of geography is, in the main, satisfactory, the improved methods of teaching this subject, which we referred to in our last report, having been fruitful of good results. The majority of our teachers present excellent schemes, and, what is still more important, carry them out faithfully. Our most successful teachers place their faith in sound oral teaching, and have relegated the Geographical Reader to a secondary position. Course A generally revealed successful treatment on right lines, and showed a satisfactory appreciation of the spirit of the syllabus. There is, however, too often a lack of connexion between the two courses, and thus excellent opportunities of correlation are unfortunately sacrificed. A clear conception should be given of the conditions under which various modes of life and industries are possible, and in dealing with towns the aim should be to work out the causes for their situation and importance, and generally to encourage intelligent reflection rather than mere verbal memory.

*History.*—In our last report a hope was expressed that with the aid of new and attractive historical readers an improvement would be shown in the teaching of this subject. We regret that our hope has not been realized as fully as we could desire. In some cases this is due to a lack of interest on the part of the teachers, while in others it may be traced to the choice of unsuitable subjects. History is not an easy subject to handle well. It calls for special qualifications on the part of the teacher, and demands considerable effort and thought not only in the presentation of the lessons, but also in the selection of the subjects to be taught. In this connexion it is well to remember that too much should not be attempted, and that history is most intelligible and interesting to children when it is most biographical, and that incidentally it may be made a means of purifying the sympathies and stirring a wholesome patriotism and a true sense of civic duty.

*Nature-study and Agriculture.*—In regard to nature-study and agriculture, it is gratifying to find that many of our teachers are making enthusiastic efforts to acquaint themselves with better and truer methods of dealing with these subjects. This means, no doubt, much work and self-denial, but nature-study can be efficiently treated only by those who possess a varied knowledge and a loving interest in nature and her ways.

In many of our schools we have noticed that the teachers have been successful in securing the active co-operation of their pupils—a true sign that the general treatment has been intelligently directed. The development of the powers of true observation of natural phenomena can be possible only when the interest and curiosity of the children have been thoroughly aroused. They must become active participants in the work, and not mere recipients of information; in fact, they must be induced to talk, examine, and experiment, the teacher's share being that of guidance and help. Thus they are led to seek first-hand knowledge, and new and permanent intellectual habits are gradually acquired. But it must not be thought that this is the sole aim of nature-study. Of equal importance is the cultivation of the sympathies of the child, the development of his æsthetic senses, and the appreciation of the beauty of his environment.

As much of the work as possible should be done in the field, and if treated in this way it forms an excellent preparation for an intelligent study of geography and agriculture, and for this very reason it is desirable that the lines followed should be most definite in aim.

In the upper classes and in those district high schools taking a rural course the elementary principles of agriculture are being taught with gratifying success, both experimentally and practically. The school-garden has now become a much-valued adjunct of our country schools. A measure of praise is due to those teachers who have willingly surrendered a portion of their holidays in order to attend the summer school for instruction in the practical methods of teaching agriculture. We hope that they will catch some of the enthusiasm of the agricultural instructor, Mr. Malcolm, to whose untiring zeal and devotion to his work is largely due the present healthy condition of elementary agriculture.

*Needlework.*—This subject gives evidence of careful oversight, and generally ranges from good to excellent. In country districts garments are the most popular form of specimens. In addition to syllabus requirements, in many schools the older girls make blouses and other garments for their own