

and in questions having reference to places of historical interest the historical fact would often be mentioned, but the geographical fact omitted, as, "Corunna, a battle in George III.'s reign." A conspicuous fault of many geography papers of the Third, Fourth, and even occasionally of the Fifth Classes is the abominable spelling of the names. "Edinburgh on the Further Forth," "Cotts in China" are examples. The mapping from memory was very well done by some scholars at schools of all kinds, but for good "all round" map drawing Kanieri was as usual decidedly first, followed closely by Kumara, Woodstock, and Ross. The mapping at Hokitika is as a rule very poor, although a collection of well-drawn maps was always to be seen in some of the class rooms: these, however, must have been copied, and not drawn from memory.

HISTORY as a class subject was fairly well dealt with in the higher classes, though it does not make so good a show in these as it does in the Third Class, where teachers have the privilege of selecting the events, &c., upon which their pupils are to be questioned. But in spite of this the answers of the Third and Fourth Classes frequently gave the impression of being the result of learning by rote, and evidently were totally destitute of any meaning in the minds of the scholars. In fact, in many cases the children might have spent their time to as much advantage in committing to memory a column of advertisements from any old newspaper. Here are some answers: "The feudal system lived in the reign of William I.:" "Magna Charta, a fleet formed in the reign of John to invade England, &c.:" "The discovery of America took place in the Stuart period; it was that the people signed a paper to have William III. for their king." Perhaps the following answer from a Fifth Standard scholar may have been intended for a pun: "Wolsey was for many years Henry VIII.'s soul adviser." On the whole I am inclined to doubt that any benefit is derived from the presence of history in the syllabus for classes below the Sixth and Seventh.

DRAWING was a compulsory subject in the three lower standards, and was as a rule very fairly accomplished at most of the schools. Some of the smaller schools, as might have been expected in a subject requiring so much individual attention, and in its earlier stages, were even more successful than the larger ones. As a class subject, drawing was taken up by half the schools in the district, and with very fair results at one-fourth of them. At Stafford the higher classes made an attempt at geometrical drawing, but the simple problem set was but imperfectly dealt with by the majority of the scholars, although, judging from the condition of the freehand drawing, a large proportion of the time allotted to this subject must have been devoted to that branch. The attempt, however, showed a praiseworthy endeavour to comply with the full requirements of the regulations. Drawing for the current year is a compulsory subject in the Fourth Standard, and geometrical drawing is included in the syllabus. It will therefore be necessary to provide the schools with proper drawing instruments. I have, with the sanction of the Board, taken steps to provide a supply of the indispensable articles, and should be glad to be authorised to obtain a set of models of the simpler solids for each of the principal schools, as without them the teaching of drawing plans, sections, and elevations cannot be intelligibly taught to young children. I have written to the Secretary of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington for particulars as to the cost of those generally used in England.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE AND OBJECT LESSONS.—Elementary science is taught at most of the larger schools, and in the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Classes with a very fair amount of success. The scholars of the Fourth Standard do not seem capable of even remembering correctly, much less of understanding, what they have been taught, and this not necessarily through any fault in the teaching, for the upper classes at most of the schools, which are taught either with the Fourth or by the same teachers, give abundant indications of sound and intelligent instruction. The comparative failure of the Fourth Standard is partly due to the immature condition of the intellectual faculties at the early age at which the standard is passed, partly to the absence at some schools of any apparatus, or even illustrative diagrams, and partly to the very limited time which it is possible to devote to the subject. The answers given to questions set at the examination frequently display a confusion of ideas indicative of an entire absence of any intelligent conception of the simplest physical and physiological facts, occasionally relieved by a gleam of unconscious humour. The following are a few specimens: "Sound is conveyed through the air by a number of books stood upon their ends at equal distances, so that if you knock the first down," &c. "Wind is air in a hurry." "The chief forces in nature are solid liquids and gases." "When the diaphragm is pulled down the muscles of the arm stop contracting." "Because the arterial blood changes into venous blood, that is why the skin is sometimes moist." "Blood vessels, veins and arterillies." "The sternum is at the back." "The gas trick juice." "Digestion is the machine that keeps the stomach rolling round and round." One scholar, in answer to the question, "Describe the action of the heart," made answer, "The heart is deceitful above all thing." The foregoing examples are sufficient to bear out my assertion that, unless under exceptionally favourable circumstances, science cannot be advantageously taught to classes below the Fifth. A little instruction in bookkeeping, with the easier cases of mensuration, such as are required in land measurement and house work, together with plenty of practice in mental and commercial arithmetic for boys, with dressmaking and domestic economy for the girls, would seem to be a more rational preparation for scholars who may shortly be compelled to turn their backs upon the work of the schoolroom to enter upon the harder work of the world. The object lessons, so called, are in many cases merely lessons of instruction, without any "object," or sometimes without even a picture of an object, before the class. At one of our best schools I was certainly surprised to find an object lesson on "cotton" being given in this way, although two boxes of Oliver and Boyd's object-lesson cards had been in the school for years, and "cotton" was one of the set illustrative of the vegetable kingdom. The Third Standard children were required to give a full account of one of the "objects" contained in the syllabus presented by the teachers, and the result was on the whole fairly satisfactory as to the facts reproduced, but at nearly every school this exercise abounded with ill-spelt words—not long and difficult words only, but the very easiest and simplest. It is to be hoped that this does not indicate disregard of the spelling by the teachers when examining these lessons on ordinary occasions.