

refrain, as far as possible, from using definite and characteristic names for familiar and distinct grammatical forms and sentence-elements. To be constantly using roundabout descriptions and adumbrations of the nature and use of such forms and sentence-elements, is not only wasting valuable time and fostering nebulous thinking, but it ignores the fact that a name for a word-form, or a specific relation to other words, or a definite sentence-element, that we readily recognise and mentally distinguish, is a convenience so great and so insistent that we may fairly reckon it a necessity. Teachers will, I hope, prove wiser than to closely follow this unwise advice. During the past year grammar as defined in the old syllabus was satisfactorily taught in a very fair number of schools, but in some of the smaller schools the teaching clearly declined.

In Standard VI., where geography is a pass subject, much creditable work has been met with, but in many of the smaller schools the knowledge of physical and mathematical geography is still weak. In Standards I. and II. the subject has been efficiently taught; in Standards IV. and V. it has been less satisfactory, varying much in quality from school to school, and even from class to class. The new courses of study in geography present an extreme contrast to the old ones. They bring into prominence the direct observation of local features and phenomena, combined with a more general consideration of the agents of earth-sculpture illustrated by pictures and other aids to clear realisation, leaving political and commercial geography to be learned from the reading of suitable readers. The change in the scope of this study is likely to further the ends of education, but it will demand from teachers much thoughtful preparation and a decided departure from old methods of treatment. The necessary adjustment will take time, and for a season work will, no doubt, proceed on tentative lines. The preparation of good local maps, representing the natural features of the district with which the children are familiar, will be indispensable, and should be proceeded with forthwith. I understand that the Education Department will make arrangements for supplying plans of the districts adjoining schools, but these will form nothing more than the basis of the fuller maps that must be provided for the intelligent study of local geography. The mathematical geography prescribed for Standard VI. will, I fear, prove a difficult and embarrassing study; time alone will show how far it can be successfully dealt with. That geographical studies should be founded on the experience and the direct observation of pupils is in every way desirable, and if the teachers conform to the aims of the syllabus with reasonable closeness there must be a decided gain in educative effect.

It is not desirable that text-books dealing with Course A geography should be placed in the hands of pupils. In most schools, indeed, the treatment of the subject will vary more or less widely, as the varying local features and conditions demand. The use of text-books would mean the continuance of rote-learning to a hurtful degree and the discouragement of direct observation, and of that reasoning about and tentative explanation of what is observed, that should form the backbone of the instruction. Such text-books may, however, be of much service in affording guidance to those who feel the need of it.

Drawing is well taught in a considerable number of schools, especially in the larger ones, and satisfactorily in most. Blank books are coming into use more and more, and they should be used everywhere. Under the advice of Mr. Harry Wallace the drawing of plain and coloured patterns and designs, many of the latter original, has made very satisfactory progress in the schools he has been able to visit. In many other schools promising work in brush drawing is being carried on, and pupils and teachers alike display considerable enthusiasm for it. It is desirable that brush drawing should be taken up in all schools in which teachers can give competent direction of it, for it imparts a much better training and yields a better means of artistic expression than pencil drawing, while above all its practice demands greater honesty and fidelity in the effort put forth by the pupils. Of the many new developments of recent years, this is, in my judgment, the most valuable and the least ephemeral.

I shall not refer in any detail to the other class and additional subjects. They have all received a fair share of attention, and have, in general, been taught with considerable success. Science shows some progress, but the knowledge gained is too often vague and inexact. In the course of the year the Inspectors have repeatedly given simple examinations in writing, and the answers to these show that teachers might with advantage more freely use this means of letting their pupils and themselves see how the instruction fares. Clearness and fullness in describing experiments demonstrated by teachers should be insisted on in all such exercises. In the larger schools there was evidence of much satisfactory work in this subject. Less has been done to provide suitable equipment for science-teaching than in recent years.*

The teaching of object-lessons has been, on the whole, more intelligent, and has given greater prominence to observation and simple experiments. These lessons will now in large measure give place to a definite course of nature-study. The special preparation for this, added to the special preparation required for Course A geography, will, for a considerable time to come, impose on teachers a grievous heavy burden, and liberal allowance for deficiencies will have to be made during the coming year. Nature-study, no doubt, possesses great possibilities, but it can be efficiently directed only by those who bring to its pursuit a loving interest in Nature and her ways, and a varied knowledge of and considerable insight into them. It will, no doubt, take a full year or more before a distribution of lessons suited to the various times and seasons of the year can be definitely arranged, and first arrangements will necessarily be tentative. There are now various more or less suitable helps to this study for teachers to digest, but we must remember that lessons taught mainly from book-work or cut and dried notes are very likely to fail in the chief aim of the teaching. Records of many observations and collections of many of the materials chosen for study will have to be made and kept in a permanent form, and there should always be specimens enough for all to see clearly and conveniently. This implies a great deal of work, and I trust that teachers will gain some real satisfaction from it all, in the consciousness that their pupils are learning to use their eyes and brains to discern the beauty and the wonder of familiar objects, and mayhap laying the foundation for pursuits of lifelong interest.

* Teachers of rural schools who give a course of lessons in gardening will get much help from "Nature-teaching based upon the General Principles of Agriculture," by Watts and Freeman, and published by John Murray.