

ular to the general (p. 198). The age between six and ten should be devoted to knowledge that needs mainly an effort of memory; this is the period for beginning languages, and learning poetry and prose. He gives precedence to rational Arithmetic as being much easier than Grammar, which he puts on a par with Algebra. In teaching Geography and some other subjects, he soundly advises to proceed from the known to the unknown; by directing attention first to the geography of the scholar's native place, so far as it is within his ken. The proper study of History is a very complex matter, involving considerations of various social phenomena known under the name of sociology. Hence, even in the study of our own country, Mr. Bain points out that an intelligent appreciation of the legislative, administrative and judicial systems, of appliances for war, of agriculture, trade and manufactures, is necessary to render past events intelligible (p. 227). He shows the absurdity of plunging children of tender age into the intricacies of European history whether ancient or modern. "If it falls flat," he says, "and has to be inculcated by the force of discipline it is better withheld" (p. 228).

MERCANTILE GRADED PENMANSHIP IN ELEVEN NUMBERS. By Samuel Clare, Writing Master in the Normal and Model Schools, Toronto. Copp, Clark & Co., Toronto.

BEATTY'S SYSTEM OF PRACTICAL PENMANSHIP IN ELEVEN NUMBERS. Adam Miller & Co., Toronto.

It is as important for our schools to have a proper system of Penmanship as it is to have good text-books in reading and arithmetic. These two series of Copy Books aim at being such, and, seeing that they are of native production, are worthy of our careful scrutiny.

The "Mercantile Series," which is in process of publication, seven books being already before the public, is in the hands of Mr. Clare, who has been for many years the Writing Master in the Normal and Model Schools of this city, and his extended experience in this capacity should render him

peculiarly fitted for the work he has undertaken. An examination of the books now before us fully bears out this opinion. The first three books are elementary in their character, and are made of small size to suit the age of younger pupils; they will commend themselves to all practical teachers for the character and style of the writing, the thoroughly methodical graduation of the copies, and the regular decrease of the amount of tracing on each page, so as to allow the scholar an opportunity from the first to practise independent writing. The size of the writing is such as to enable the youngest child to fall easily into the habit of making his letters with accuracy; and the style aims to meet that important requisite of modern penmanship—rapidity with legibility—but it is in the arrangement of the exercises that Mr. Clare shows his skill as a teacher of writing. He introduces but one or two new elements in each copy, and makes consecutive lessons of those letters that are similarly formed—gradually proceeding from the easiest to the most difficult—and in order that the scholar may become thoroughly master of what he has already learnt, constant practice is provided in the letters that have been taught in previous copies. Books 1 and 2 are devoted to the small letters; in book 3, after two copies, which are intended as exercises upon the work of the previous two books, capitals are taken up, so that when a child has written through these three books he has been made tolerably well acquainted with most of what he needs to know in the way of writing. By a system of paging in No. 2 book, which might be advantageously adopted in the other two, he has learnt to make all the figures.

The teaching of figures indeed is a distinguishing feature of this series of Copy books, since in several of the larger and more advanced books special attention is given to them; this meets with our entire approval, for we hold that children whose time at school is very limited should have an opportunity as early as possible of learning to write figures correctly as well as letters and words, since they will need to use