

Correspondence, etc.

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL RECORD :

SIR,—I see by an occasional article or letter in various exchanges that the Course of Study is receiving considerable ventilation from a number of those who, I presume, are better qualified to judge of what should be taught in Government Schools, than those who have made the subject of what it is absolutely necessary that every citizen should know a life study.

Now I should wish to suggest that instead of talking of reducing or increasing this list of subjects, let us all see that we know what these subjects are, what it includes to know them, and how many of them might be omitted with advantage to the pupil.

Arithmetic, we all know, is a most important branch. The knowledge of Arithmetic includes many things. There should be a clear idea of number, and a clear idea of various operations which may be performed on a number. The ability to perform the process of adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing readily, numbers less than twelve, ought to be acquired before the pupil enters the Third Book of Reading Lessons. In order that a teacher should be able to assist a pupil to attain this with readiness, we require a large black-board, and an unlimited supply of chalk. I need not speak of the unlimited supply of patience required by the teacher. We all know that a "teacher is for the school, not the school for the teacher."

I wish to emphasize one point: we need lots of black-board and chalk. What pupil cannot recall going to the board and doing a sum there, and giving a reason for every step taken in the solution of a problem. Doing an example on the board is one of the surest methods of impressing the reasoning of said example on the mind of a pupil. I have taught for a period of ten years, and have always found a capacious black-board a most desirable aid to education.

In learning to read and spell, as well as in Arithmetic, the board is a great assistance. A nicely written column of words for the pupils to copy is a lesson in neatness, promptitude, writing and spelling. How often in schools blessed with a large board have I had the columns of little words, names of familiar objects, etc., on the board before 9 a.m., ready for my bright-eyed youngsters, who were ready to note if my letters varied in shape from one day to another. Those columns I would change at noon. Those pupils never had to wait for a spelling lesson to be written during the time which they had for learning it. What a difference to the school in which the black-board is small or unfit for use, as has been the case in some schools in which I have had the honor to teach.

I need not mention Geography or History; we cannot give these up; nor can we give up Physiology and Hygiene; nor the talks on animals, plants, minerals, etc.; and, although I am no musician, no, nor a pillar in the church, yet I would never vote to have Scripture History and Music banished from our Government Schools.