

For the REVIEW.]

### The Question of Time.

How to find the time needed to teach the various subjects of the Course of Instruction is a serious question in many, especially in miscellaneous, schools. Teachers frequently try to solve it by carefully preparing a weekly programme in which time is allowed for one or more lessons in all, or nearly all, the subjects of the course. In order to effect this, many of the lessons must be very short—so short that by the time the lesson is fairly begun it must be brought to a hasty close, and the temptation to encroach upon the time of the next lesson is often yielded to.

This plan, too, divides the attention and the energies of the children among so many different studies that their minds are confused by the multiplicity of subjects, and they show themselves unable to give earnest attention to most of them, if to any. And the effect upon the teacher, though less marked, is similar.

A much better way is to take up for several weeks about one-half of the subjects of the course—one lesson in each on every school day except Friday. One mathematical subject at a time is enough—arithmetic to be followed by algebra. Geography may alternate with history and often intermingle with it. Writing and drawing are good alternates; and so are health lessons and nature lessons. Time should be found for at least one language lesson every day, but during one period reading and literature may be emphasized, grammar to take the place for special effort in the shorter period to follow; for the periods should vary in length in proportion to the relative amount of work to be done in the alternative subjects. The pupils will thus have only a few subjects on their minds at a time, and will consequently work at them with greater zest, make more rapid progress and be encouraged by a growing sense of power.

When any subject is superseded in the "fighting line" by its alternate, the former is kept up during the next period by review exercises or drill lessons on Fridays. The written exercises in every subject should be used as means to teach spelling, writing and composition.

Under this plan, every subject of the course receives its due share of attention, without hurry, confusion, or dissipation of interest and energy.

In schools containing several grades, much time may be saved by uniting two classes in certain subjects. In geography, it makes little difference which of two countries is studied first, and in history which of two periods, for we cannot begin at the beginning of a country's history anyway. Nor does it matter much

which of two countries, or historical periods, is studied this year, and which next year. A class beginning a new reader may join one which has read a part of the book. And in nature lessons and health lessons, two classes may work together to advantage in many of the lessons.

JOHN BRITAIN.

### Smallest and Oddest Republics.

Goust is the smallest republic as to area, but Tavolara is the smallest republic as to population. Goust is only one mile in area. It is located on the flat top of a mountain in the Pyrenees, between France and Spain, and is recognized by both of those countries. It is governed by a president and council of twelve. It was established in 1648, and has 130 inhabitants. The president is tax collector, assessor and judge. Goust has no church, clergyman, or cemetery. The people worship in a church outside of their own territory, and the dead bodies are slid down to a cemetery in the valley below. In that valley all the baptisms and marriages are performed. Tavolara is twelve miles northeast of Sardinia. It is an island five miles long by a half mile wide. Its total population consists of fifty-five men, women and children. The women go to the polls with the men, and elect every year a president and council of six, all serving without pay. The inhabitants support themselves by fishing and raising fruits and vegetables. The republic has no army and no navy.—*Cincinnati Enquirer*.

### Teaching Literature to Children.

There has been a growing tendency to crowd children's minds with data about literature in the evident belief that this data is in some mysterious way a training in literature. This takes the form of extended biographic sketches of literary characters, detailed descriptions of the home and haunts of famous writers, memorized lists of authors' leading works and learned criticisms of literary productions which the pupils have not yet read. All these are interesting and, for some mental function, perhaps, valuable, but they no more enlarge the literary taste of the pupil than a lecture on foods satisfies the normal needs of the body for nourishment. Better than all biographic facts, than all lists of titles, than all formal criticisms, than all literary rambles, is one sincere effort to unfold to a child the beauty and the virtue of a great poem. Our teachers have too confidently taken the current works on literature and taught them in much the same way as history of any other sort is taught, and have come to believe that this historic survey of a field they have never entered is really teaching literature.—*Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh, at the N. E. A.*