

teaches them ; for seeing is not only believing—it is learning also.

Aim to give the children mental pictures of the countries and their people, and in doing this it is not necessary to restrict one's self to the limits of "the Grade" as prescribed by the Manual. I find that nothing interests a class more, nothing gives more characteristic pictures of a people's life, nothing feeds the starved imagination of our children better, than the folk-stories of a race. Poor indeed, is the land which possesses none. In the March *Scribners'* is a most fascinating sketch of some Mexican superstitions, and my class found it as interesting as their teacher did. I think it is better to tell children stories than to read them ; it is easier to hold their attention, and it gives an opportunity to mingle instruction and amusement in a way that the author does not always provide for, so that they swallow the wholesome medicine of fact along with the equally wholesome and more palatable sweetmeat of fancy.

Geography is a valuable aid in the development of the picture-making faculty of a child's mind, and surely no one of our mental powers is productive of more pleasure. Say but

the word "Mexico," and what vision rises before our mind's eye? The statement that Mexico is a federation of twenty-eight states and its area is 943,000 square miles? No, indeed, but a vision of waving palms, of snow-covered mountains, of quaintly picturesque cities, the land of Montezuma and Cortez, of mystery and antiquity. And are our children to learn that Egypt pays tribute to Turkey, and has for its capital Cairo, with no word of all the marvellous past that makes its very name a fascination? Are they to learn the exports of Wyoming, with no hint of the wonders of the Yellowstone Park?

These mental pleasures enrich our workaday lives, and it is our duty to help to confer them upon our pupils. I know this kind of instruction does not necessarily produce high class-averages (though not incompatible with good percentages), but the day is dawning, let us hope, when a teacher's work is not to be estimated in figures, as we measure cord-wood, or weigh coal.

Meanwhile, to arouse the children's interest in such a study as geography is in itself a clear and distinct gain to both pupils and teacher.—*The Teacher.*

LETTER-WRITING AS A FINE ART.

BY WILLIAM M. THAYER.

A BEAUTIFUL letter, written by a High School girl, suggested our theme. Evidently she had studied the art of writing letters until she thoroughly understood the business. Punctuation, capitals, chirography, superscription, everything about the epistle was first-class. The next critical observer could find nothing to criticize adversely. We found upon inquiry that in her school instruction

was given upon letter-writing. And why not? It is one of the most common things done ; usually very poorly done ; so poorly as to indicate that in schools generally this art is neglected. There are few efficient letter-writers. There would be many more if the subject received but occasional attention in our Grammar and High Schools.

It goes without saying that the