

selves so readily as one could have desired. Such schools should not, therefore, be taken as a fair index of the schools in general. But I am of opinion that more is to be laid to the account of the teacher than to the circumstances of the place, for in a school the most secluded I have heard as good reading and found as much intelligence as in the most favoured districts; and one is led to infer that as good results should be obtained in other places whose surroundings are in no way inferior, were equal in energy and ability available in their teachers.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.

The results in this subject continue to be satisfactory. Both the oral spelling of the younger classes and the dictation exercises of the upper classes were generally marked as accurate. In a few schools more practice in transcription and dictation seemed necessary to bring them up to the general level.

WRITING.

A greater proportion of passes has been made in writing than in any other subject. The slate writing of the junior classes was often excellent, and such as to show that a taste for neatness and beauty of form had been excited within the pupils. The writing on copy-books and paper showed considerable improvement. There was not wanting evidence of care on the part of the pupils, and also careful supervision by the teachers. The instances were comparatively few in which the writing seemed to be left very much to take care of itself. Some teachers seem to think that they have done their duty when they have placed a copy-book with a head-line before their pupils, and that constant supervision and criticism are not necessary.

ARITHMETIC.

In more than one-half of the schools examined by me the arithmetic was marked unsatisfactory. In the others it was generally marked well-advanced and accurately known. Failures in the lower classes often arose from errors in notation, and in the higher classes from inability to deal successfully with problems requiring some thought. The junior classes, as a rule, were well posted up in the elementary tables and oral addition, but they generally failed in subtraction. With the use of Reith and Wilkie's tables, addition and subtraction might be taught together, and the latter as easily as the former. Much time and care will require to be given to the explanation on the black-board of principles and processes, and sustained efforts made in order to get the pupils to think, by exercising them in a variety of well-graduated calculations, before satisfactory results can be expected, especially in the higher arithmetic classes. A considerable amount of this necessary training could be accomplished by a well-regulated course of mental arithmetic—a subject deserving of more attention than it generally receives.

GRAMMAR.

I have generally found this subject very fairly advanced and understood. Oral teaching and better-directed explanation have had a good deal to do with this improvement. The classes required to name some or all of the parts of speech in a sentence generally do so without much difficulty. Considerable difficulty seems to be experienced in pointing out with sufficient minuteness and accuracy the syntax relations in a sentence. Numbers of the higher classes have been marked "not pass" on this account. Improvement in analysis has been made, although obscurity still continues to surround the subject in some quarters.

GEOGRAPHY.

Geography during the past year was generally examined orally. The subject being such a wide one, it was found that sufficient ground could not be got over by means of written papers, to test the knowledge of it possessed by the pupils. In a considerable number of schools this subject was in a backward state, especially in the higher classes.

COMPOSITION.

No systematic or well-directed efforts have been made to teach composition, except in extremely few instances, and consequently little general progress has been made in it. The specimens I have seen, which consisted for the most part of reproduction exercise or essays on familiar subjects, were not generally of a high order. The sentences were often of such a peculiar structure as to show that little or no instruction had been given to the pupils regarding the nature of a sentence or how to form one. Subjects frequently had no predicates, and predicates no subjects. Capital letters and punctuation were often entirely disregarded. Considering its importance in the affairs of life, the art of composition deserves a more important place in the school course. At present, the study, or rather the practice of it, is confined nearly always to the most advanced classes, and is considered quite beyond the reach of those of a lower grade. But composition is not more mysterious than grammar, of which it is at least the complement, and from which it should never be divorced. It should therefore be taught conjointly with grammar—commenced as soon, and similarly graduated to every standard. In fact, the two are but parts of one whole. Grammar, as at present taught, deals almost exclusively with the language as used in the compositions of others, and consists chiefly in naming, defining, and in tracing the various relations and functions in a sentence of the eight parts of speech, and, with the use of analysis, the separation of a sentence into its component parts. But the knowledge of all this can be shown only to be thorough and complete by reducing it to practice, in giving expression to one's own thoughts and ideas in clear, correct, and forcible language.

As soon as children have acquired a correct idea of the two essential parts of a sentence, the subject and predicate, and have an acquaintance with the noun and the verb, they should be set to form sentences, receiving plenty of help at first. A knowledge of the use of adjectives and adverbs