

is that teachers appear to be quite insensible to all this, and are apparently satisfied if the pupil under direct instruction is attending to his work. Of course the attention of all could be assured by causing, at suitable intervals, the books to be closed, and asking a few questions on what had been read; but the questions must be pertinent, and, moreover, not require looking for. In fine, the lesson must be prepared beforehand, and its general manner of treatment determined upon. No teacher, I believe, that does not systematically prepare his lessons can do the fullest justice either to himself or his pupils—make the most of his time or of theirs.

**SPELLING.**—The standards examined orally (First and Second) did very well, those examined in dictation on paper (Third, Fourth, and Fifth) very badly. The inferior quality of the answering in the case of these latter I attribute to the very unsatisfactory methods employed in the dictation exercise. At an inspector's examination pupils are so placed that copying and prompting are impossible; in class work under the teacher any amount of copying and prompting is possible, and, I regret to add, is common. The remedy is vigilance on the part of the teacher. Another element of weakness lies in the fact that nearly all the time allotted to the dictation exercise is spent in actual dictation. Errors are thus daily committed and seldom corrected. Wrong impressions are printed on the mind, and little effort is made to efface and replace them by correct ones. Unless they devote more time to the correction of errors, teachers had better abandon the exercise altogether, and substitute transcription in its stead. In any case transcription should, even in the advanced classes, frequently take the place of dictation. The utility of this exercise, however, depends also quite largely on the manner of conducting it. The following method is recommended: Always transcribe a portion of the reading-lesson for the day. Let the pupils read over (not more than twice at most) one or two phrases, or a sentence, turn over their reading books, and write what they have read on their slates or exercise-books. This done, let them repeat the process until about half the time allotted to the exercise has expired. The written work should then be compared by the pupils with the printed passage, all mis-spelt words marked, and thereafter written out correctly from five to ten times each. With advanced classes the exercise should more often take the following shape: At the teacher's dictation the pupils underline the more difficult and uncommon words in the reading-lesson for the day. They then read over as many of the underlined words as they can with difficulty remember, turn their books over and write the words on their slates or exercise-books; and so on, until all the words underlined are written out. They then compare their own spelling with that of the book, after which all mis-spelt words are written out correctly from five to ten times each. One of the best spellers should always be told off to take a note of the mis-spelt words, and at suitable intervals—say at the end of every four or five days—these words should form the basis of another spelling exercise. It is perhaps necessary to add that, if any words are forgotten, the fact should be indicated by a dash. In this way the maximum of work is got out of the pupils, the possibility of writing a word incorrectly even once is immensely reduced, the attention and the memory are cultivated, and the teacher is free in the meantime to teach another class.

**WRITING.**—What I complained of last year must again be complained of this—in the majority of schools the subject is not taught: the black-board is not used in the correction of errors. In collective teaching the proper way to correct an error is to write the letters as written by the pupil on the black-board, and alongside of them the letters as written in the headline, to direct the attention of all the pupils to the two kinds of letters, and get them to point out wherein those written by the pupil differ from those in the headline. Of course the pupils know that this difference is the error, and will, in future, guard against it. Where I find a child writing in a suitable copybook, and plainly making every effort to imitate the headline, I invariably record a pass; but where there is plainly little or no effort made to imitate the headline, I invariably pluck the child. Dirty, smeary copybooks are always rejected. A careful and competent teacher can rely upon getting 100 per cent. in this subject. Neither the proper position of the body, nor the proper way to hold the pen, is anything like sufficiently insisted on.

**ARITHMETIC.**—Some improvement is noticeable in the manner of treating arithmetic; but the subject is still made too much a matter of rules. Explanations and demonstrations on the black-board, by well-chosen examples, of the principles and applications of the rules are not at all prominent features in our school method. It is true there are few teachers that do not work sums on the black-board before their pupils, and tell them how these and similar sums are done; but I have seldom seen the working out of the reason "why" by skillful statement and question. The questions "How do you know?" and "Why?" do not occur with sufficient frequency. Instead of merely assisting pupils to correct solutions, many teachers do almost all the work for them. For example: In silent work from books, some of the pupils are unable to do one or two of the sums, the teacher straightway either works the sums, or shows his pupils how to do them. This, of course, is very unwise, and can certainly not be called educating. The following method has been found to be successful: Construct similar problems and write them on the black-board, and help the pupil to a mastery of the principles involved in them; cause the children to construct similar problems, and thereafter to solve them; and, finally, send them to their places to work the sums over which they had previously stumbled. With practice, children soon acquire surprising facility in the construction of these problems. This is an exercise that is deserving of greater prominence in the higher classes. Numeration and notation are generally well taught; but the first and second classes are still very weak in the addition table. Mental arithmetic is very weak.

**GRAMMAR.**—This subject still continues to be ill taught in the majority of schools. The intensely stupid practice of putting a grammar-book into the hands of young children, and causing them to learn the rules and definitions, still too widely obtains. I have not infrequently found children able to repeat glibly enough the definitions of the parts of speech, and yet unable to distinguish an adjective in an easy sentence. Instead of being led by the study of simple cases to evolve the general proposition, these poor children are made to begin with the general proposition and descend to the particular case—to begin with the abstract and end with the concrete! No wonder the way is difficult! In the advanced classes, full parsing and the analysis of sentences are taught; but the fact that these exercises are only means to an end is, I fear, in the main lost sight of. Just as parsing should be taught with