

*and the pupil only responds with single words, the questioning is bad. The great object should be with the minimum of your own words to draw out the maximum of words and thought from him.** Ask yourself, when your scholars close their books and you question them on the reading-lesson, how the series of answers would look if taken down by an unseen reporter, and printed out in full—would they be orderly? Would they be readable? Would they cover the whole ground, and make a complete summary of what has been learned? Unless your questions would stand this test, you have yet something to learn of the teacher's craft.

And much more to the same purpose is contained in the lecture from which the foregoing is extracted. The whole lecture is well worth the serious consideration of every teacher that realizes the weight of his responsibilities, and that desires to advance with the advancing knowledge of the age. I have dwelt at some length on the question of language, because, owing to press of subjects and of classes upon the teacher, the study of it in the primary schools is attended with considerable difficulty, because it is, in my view, the most important subject of the whole school course, and because I firmly believe that much of the poor answering in other subjects—especially in grammar and arithmetic—is due to the very slender knowledge possessed by the examinees of the meaning of the language in which the questions are expressed.

SPELLING AND WRITING.—Most of the schools are very strong in spelling. In writing the average percentage gained is 91. Nine out of every 100 children examined therefore failed to pass. This is too large a proportion of failures in so mechanical a subject as writing. With care, nearly 100 per cent. should be gained, for we pass every copy that is clean, and accurate as to points of junction, distance, and relative length of letters. More thoroughgoing blackboard criticism is needed in the junior standards. In several schools the writing was excellent, and the neatness of the exercise-books beyond all praise. The junior classes were frequently found writing with bits of pencil about as long as a man's thumb-nail. Of course the usual penalty is bound to be exacted when these children begin to work with the pen.

ARITHMETIC.—The results gained in this subject are a poor return for the large amount of time devoted to it, and show either that the syllabus is too difficult, or that the teaching is faulty. My observation leads me to adopt the latter alternative. In the lower standards failures were often due to inadequate knowledge of the addition and multiplication tables—tables which, when understood, should be thoroughly committed to memory; and in the upper to want of power to gather up the full meaning of the language in which the sums were expressed, and to inadequate knowledge of the principles of arithmetic, and their practical application. More abundant use of the blackboard, and much more thoroughness in impressing explanations of principles and processes upon the minds of the pupils, are greatly needed. With the explanations given there is seldom any fault to be found; but I do think that in many cases very insufficient care is taken to impress them on the children's minds. Analysis of numbers is very little practised in the junior standards, and arithmetical composition not at all that I know of in the senior. Both these exercises are invaluable in the study of this subject.

GRAMMAR.—Good answering in grammar depends very largely upon familiarity with the meaning of words. To tell the function of a word a child must know its meaning, and a similar remark applies to the function of the phrase and the sentence. The meaning is generally poorly known, and hence the character of the answering is often not so satisfactory as one could wish. With more attention to the study of language we may expect greatly increased proficiency in grammar. Sufficient use is not, I think, made of analysis in the teaching of composition. Children seldom make mistakes in the placing of simple attributes and extensions; but when these consist of phrases and sentences there is but little skill shown in the disposition of them. It is in dealing with phrases and sentences that analysis might be made a powerful instrument in the teaching of composition. The composition is invariably better in the schools in which Mr. Park's little manual is used than in others. This is an excellent introductory book, and, if it were supplemented in the higher classes by Abbott's little manual, "How to Write Clearly," there cannot be the least doubt that the quality of this exercise would greatly improve.

GEOGRAPHY.—The work of the higher standards is much better known than that of the lower. In the Second Standard, for example, where the work is very easy, of every 100 children examined, 21 failed. In this standard definitions were almost invariably well given, whilst the questions on the map were for the most part very poorly answered. This points to insufficient training in map reading.

HISTORY.—Every practical teacher knows that the philosophy of history cannot be taught in the elementary school. There is no time for it. The most that should be attempted, certainly the most that can be done without trenching upon time that ought to be occupied by the study of other and more important subjects, is to get into the children's minds, in the most intelligent way practicable, a good skeleton of the subject—a firm outline to be filled in at more mature age. The results given in the tables show that in the Board's schools this is being done with a considerable degree of success.

SEWING.—The quality of the sewing ranged from fair to very good; but very few schools presented all the kinds of work specified in the syllabus.

SINGING AND DRAWING.—The regulations relating to these subjects are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. A few schools gained good results in singing, but in the majority of them the subject was not taken up.

OBJECT LESSONS AND ELEMENTARY SCIENCE.—Most of the schools were found to have done more or less work in one or both of these subjects; but my questions did not often succeed in eliciting intelligent answers. Nearly all the lessons I have seen given were far too verbal, and tended very little to develop the observing and reasoning faculties. They might very properly be termed "information lessons," but their educative value was, I fear, very trifling.

RECORDS.—In many schools the records were not fully written up and kept in accordance with the instructions issued with each register. With one or two exceptions, I found the daily register marked with regularity, and with as much accuracy as is possible without verifying the marking by counting the number of pupils present at roll call; but the quarterly summations were sometimes

* The italics are mine.