

*Methods.*—Two or three years ago I commented on certain faults of method more or less prevalent in the Board's schools. Though there has been considerable improvement since these remarks were made, there is still much to complain of. Indeed, I sometimes fear that passing the standard examination is becoming more, and training the minds of the pupils less, the aim of an increasingly large number of teachers. Throughout the schools examining or testing methods predominate over educative methods. Take, as an example, the explanation of the English lessons, as conducted in several important schools. The pupils take their slates and write out as well as they can the meaning of some words or phrases read by the teacher, often without any or sufficient context (a most grave omission); they then change slates, and the answers are marked correct or incorrect by the pupils after the teacher has heard a number of the answers read, and said whether they "will do" or "won't do." The final result is that the pupils have heard for each phrase a variety of expressions of very mixed merit, without knowing which is the best, or what are the faults or what the merits of any. The process is elaborate, wasteful of time, and, as usually conducted, yields no appreciable mental training, and leads to no definite result. Its chief merit is that it keeps the class employed, and so produces at least the semblance of attention and activity. Now, I think fresh work of this kind should always be taken orally; incorrect answers being amended by suggestions elicited from the pupils. It is by this process of eliciting emendations that mental training is to be gained, and the skill of the teacher is tested and improved. The result of skilful treatment would be an accurate definition or paraphrase drawn from the class of the word or phrase *in the sense which it bears in the particular connection given*: and it should be stated by two or more pupils, set in its proper context, or, if need be, written by them on their slates or by the teacher on the blackboard. By this line of treatment fewer words may be got over in the time available than by the other, but the benefit to the scholars will be incomparably greater. Examining methods are very useful in their own place—*e.g.*, in recapitulation and testing what has been taught, and in revising; but in dealing with new matter they are ineffective as means of educative training, and usually wasteful of time.

Another point I then complained of was neglect to work in and impress what was taught. Much of the teaching I see is still marked by this fault. A certain amount of repetition is needed to fix things in the mind of the average scholar, and exhibition on the blackboard is an important help that is not sufficiently turned to account. Recapitulation of difficulties at the end of a lesson is also most helpful, though now rarely practised. But the chief thing to be trusted to is comprehension of the matter taught. To secure this, simple familiar examples in illustration of what is remote, difficult, or abstract should be freely used, and, if possible, drawn from the pupils, to make the matter intelligible, and put it in living relation with what is already known. Skill in using such illustrations effectively should be specially aimed at by every intelligent teacher. The chief avenue to easy and firm recollection is a clear understanding of the matter; what is not understood is sure to lapse from the memory.

Again, the inductive method is too often ignored in the teaching of grammar and arithmetic. It is quite a common thing, for example, to find pupils required to learn the general rules for forming the plural of nouns or the comparison of adjectives before any examples are considered, just as if the pupils habitually referred to the rule to guide them in forming the plural or what else it may be. In the case of a foreign or dead language this is what is usually done; and the sooner the rule is known and ready to be applied deductively the better. But with one's mother-tongue the case is very different. Here all the pupils are already quite familiar with the plurals, comparatives, &c., of the words discussed, and in these circumstances the proper and educative line of proceeding is to elicit the rule by comparison of familiar examples, and so establish it inductively. Thus arrived at, it will be understood and easily remembered. This method can and should be used in teaching three-fourths of the grammar and much of the arithmetic prescribed for the public school course. In dealing with these subjects, and wherever else he can, every true teacher will guide his pupils upwards from the particular to the general, and from what is familiar to what is strange, and in so doing will find the path of progress less steep and thorny for himself, and infinitely more pleasant and more instructive for them. Teachers who err in this matter have the excuse that they follow in the lines of the text-books. Alas! that is too true. But any one worthy of the honourable name of teacher should and will never rest satisfied with merely getting his pupils to know and apply certain rules and principles, but will strive to impart this knowledge to them in the way that will best nurture and educate the powers of the intellect. Assuredly, in education the important thing is not "What do you know?" but, "How have you learned what you know?" There should be little danger of teachers losing sight of the inductive method in teaching, for not only is it much insisted on in every modern book on school methods, but it invariably makes known its excellence by its fruits, and yields to intelligent examination results that no amount of "cramming" can rival. But, in spite of all this, it is very hard to get it consistently carried out in the daily teaching.

These remarks on methods are set down in the hope that they may lead to some improvement. There are faithful and in many respects excellent teachers, who err in one or more of the matters discussed from mere thoughtlessness and old habit. I would fain persuade these to take more heed to their modes of teaching, and to make the training of their pupils their chief and ever present aim, and not mere success in passing them at the standard examinations. If they honestly try they will find that the two things are not at all incompatible. I trust that the prominence given to criticism in my remarks on instruction and methods will not leave on the minds of members of the Board the impression that education is in a bad way in their schools. The figures showing the examination results sufficiently show the contrary.

*Discipline, &c.*—The discipline of the schools is certainly one of their best features, and, broadly regarded, is a credit to the community as well as to the teachers. I should like to see more attention to the Board's rule directing teachers to see that their pupils' books are covered and cared for. The prominence given to attention to manners and behaviour in the new regulations should prove