

English, and make it more thorough and intelligent. No less helpful will it be found to give the pupils a good deal of practice in simply describing or explaining how the questions are to be done. In the ordinary teaching of arithmetic at the blackboard this exercise forms but a small part of the work, most of the time being taken up with the merely mechanical operations of adding, multiplying, and so on. From Standard IV. upwards it would be well to restrict this mechanical work as far as possible, and to concentrate attention during actual teaching on analysis of the data, and brief but clear statements of the mode of solution. Even mechanical questions however—exercises in practice and the addition question—in Standards II. and III., for example, are by no means so accurately done as one would expect. Failure in such sums shows that the operations of the simple rules have not been properly mastered. In Standards II. and III. the first aim of the teaching should be to impart quickness and accuracy in adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and changing one denomination of money to another. Compared with a thorough mastery of these operations ability to do simple problems is of very slight consequence. In the arithmetic papers of Standards II. and III. four-fifths of the work is direct, and on that alone every well-trained pupil should be able to pass. In these classes we would much rather find entire neglect of simple problems than have accuracy and thoroughness in the common operations wholly sacrificed for them. The low percentage of passes in Standard V. is largely owing to failures in arithmetic, most of which are to be attributed to unskilful teaching.

Grammar is, on the whole, well taught in most of the schools. The Standard V. class, however, showed considerable weakness in the subject, the failures in it being almost as numerous as in arithmetic. In a good many cases the work of Standard VI. was also unsatisfactory. In our opinion there is far too little *viva voce* work in the grammar lessons of these standards.

We cannot report any general improvement in composition, which, though abundantly practised, is but little taught. It frequently happens that no provision is made in the time-tables for giving regular instruction in the art, and where such provision exists the handling of the lesson is usually disappointing. In some schools, however, it is taught with very considerable success, and the superior exercises handed in by nine-tenths of the pupils of these schools show that nothing but want of perseverance and want of skill prevents the attainment of equally satisfactory results in all cases. One of the chief causes of want of success in teaching this subject is neglect of rough analysis of a very elementary character. In Standard IV. the linking of simple statements into longer sentences, and the converse process of roughly analysing longer sentences into their component statements, should receive a great deal of attention and illustration. This discipline is always well imparted in the schools in which composition is successfully taught, and it is the chief cause of the success which they attain. To pupils in Standard IV. the exercise should present no difficulty, for the parsing at this stage presupposes a knowledge of the functions of conjunctions, of relative pronouns, and of relative adverbs, and this knowledge supplies the key to the connection of the statements of which long sentences are built up. The exercises and essays that are so commonly written in schools afford excellent material for criticism and illustration of principles. To serve this purpose the faults should be criticised and corrected at the blackboard before the class, the pupils themselves taking as large a share as possible in the work. To correct the exercises singly or privately and then return them to the pupils is to throw away one of the best means of teaching the subject which the teacher has at his disposal. It is not enough to mark errors in such cases; the pupils must be taught how and why they are wrong. This, we fear, is often neglected, as it is no unusual thing to find that the pupils don't know why the parts marked by the teacher are wrong. Where this is the case all the labour of correction is a useless form. A notable feature in the composition exercises received at the standard examinations is their brevity. Even when the subjects are most familiar, and the children must know a great deal about them, the letters and essays are extremely short. In some of the reading books brief summaries are appended to the lessons. These the pupils frequently reproduce almost *verbatim*, instead of trying to tell in their own words what they remember of the matter. We have even found pupils committing these summaries to memory in school, while under the teacher's supervision. Those who tolerate this sort of cram may be anxious that their pupils should pass, but they must be wholly indifferent to their education and equipment for life. Of course little or no credit is allowed for such feats of memory. Readiness in putting one's thoughts into words should be greatly promoted by the practice and training, which all school-children receive, in orally answering the questions which form so large an element in all teaching. They are asked and answer many hundreds of questions every year. If they are carefully trained to give their answers in the form of sentences, and also to make them fairly full and complete, this discipline alone should give them considerable facility in expressing what they have to say. For this purpose a large proportion of the questions asked should be so framed as to elicit a connected statement of some length, and afford practice in gathering up a number of particulars into one whole. Such questions will naturally abound where English lessons, object lessons, and history lessons are skilfully taught. We are pleased to see that considerable pains is now taken to secure the kind of training here contemplated, and we feel sure that it will give substantial help in teaching composition.

History is now a class subject in all the standards in which it is taught, and geography in Standards II. and IV. We do not find that the teaching has deteriorated in any way in consequence of their transference from the list of pass to that of class subjects. In only a small number of schools are Standards IV. and V. grouped together for geography and history. Teachers of all small schools would act wisely in availing themselves of this privilege.

A satisfactory number of object lessons is now given in all except a very few schools. From these the pupils derive a good deal of useful information, but it is very doubtful if the lessons are generally handled in such a way as to cultivate and strengthen the faculty of observation and the power of describing what lies before the eyes of the scholars. We are confident that object lessons