

use of the blackboard must be continued in the writing lessons right through the standards from the lowest to the highest. Even in one year a school whose reputation for writing is of the poorest may be brought up to rank with the best.

*Spelling.*—The dictation and spelling tests have, as usual, been taken from the class reading-books. The results in most cases have shown with how much industry the lessons have been ransacked for every passage and word that might cause a child to trip during examination, and the reward of all this labour has been a strong pass in spelling in by far the greater number of our schools. In about a fifth of the schools, either through less diligence in preparation, or on account of a loose mode of correction and revision of mistakes, far too many failures in spelling were recorded. The frequent recurrence of misspelt words in exercises other than the formal dictation and spelling tests has again been noticeable. If the great body of our scholars were to form the habit of reading more extensively than they now do, I am sure it would have a good effect on their spelling, for it will be found that with rare exceptions those who read most spell best.

*Arithmetic.*—Arithmetic has been steadily improving from year to year, and the results this year have been satisfactory on the whole. The importance of the subject itself, and the definiteness with which the progress of each individual can be tested by examination have secured for it the place of honour among the primary-school subjects. Teachers feel that in teaching arithmetic they must put forth their strongest efforts, for the popular verdict as to their ability to conduct a school will be largely influenced by the success or failure of their scholars in this subject. In thirty-seven schools the results ranged from good to excellent; in fourteen schools they were fairly good; and in the eight remaining schools they tailed off from moderate to positive failure. In several schools fingers were freely made use of for counting by children of the First and Second Standards. I was sorry to see this; I thought such a stupid and laborious habit would have been stamped out by this time; its appearance in a class is a sure sign of weak teaching.

*Composition and Grammar.*—Steady progress continues to be made in the teaching of composition, and the letters and short essays of the pupils are much improved. A good foundation in sentence-making is being laid in the Third Standard; and the pupils who are now passing up to the higher standards should not be open to the reproach of passing through the public-school course without acquiring sufficient skill to write an ordinary letter that will be clear in its meaning, and free from grammatical blunders. When grammar held a place among the pass-subjects the results were far from satisfactory in the majority of our schools. It is no better taught now, when it ranks as a class-subject; and in some schools I fear the kind of work shown indicated something approaching neglect in its treatment. As an intellectual exercise no other subject the children are called upon to deal with can compare with the grammar lesson; and I always regard good work done in grammar as sure evidence of skilful teaching. The best use of the analysis of sentences seems to me to be very often lost sight of. The scholars are generally asked to write out the analysis of a sentence or two on slates or on paper. The exercises are marked and corrections pointed out; and there the matter usually ends. But instead of making this a written exercise on almost every occasion, it should only rarely be so used. It should be the brightest and keenest of oral lessons—a kind of parsing lesson, not of words, but of clauses and phrases—and much ground should be covered in very little time. The pupils should then be encouraged to rebuild the sentences, or to model others after the pattern of those they have been taking to pieces. The analysis lesson would thus be brought into close connection with the composition lesson, with which, as it is now treated in many schools, it would appear to have nothing in common.

*Drawing.*—Drawing remains much about the same as last year. A great deal of the school time is spent over it, more perhaps than can be well spared from other subjects in the higher standards. The relief afforded to the girls of the Fourth and Sixth Standards by the excision of geometrical drawing from their course was much appreciated, but there was considerable disappointment when it was found that scale drawing was not wiped out from the work required from girls of the Fifth Standard. In nearly all the schools the children of Standards I., II., and III. were well grounded in the knowledge of geometrical forms prescribed for them; indeed, their head-work was much in advance of their hand-work.

*Geography.*—In Standard II. the children had usually a good knowledge of the meaning of a map and of the principal geographical terms. What they did best, however, was the pointing out of continents, oceans, and seas; and in the best-taught classes a short description of the position of the seas were readily added as the pointer travelled over the map from sea to sea. This descriptive accompaniment was in a good many instances carried into the work of Standard III. and the higher standards. If children are trained to use their maps well, and to interpret what they see, they will learn a great deal without a text-book. Map-drawing is not sufficiently practised by the children, and fewer teachers than one would expect show themselves expert in sketching maps on the blackboard in presence of their class, and filling in details as the lesson proceeds.

*History.*—In history the selected dates were almost always accurately known; indeed, it was the rule to find the dates well prepared even where the lessons themselves had little merit. It was hoped that the history lessons would have greatly improved when the choice of what he should teach from the prescribed periods was left to the teacher, and the number of lessons was limited to twenty-five. The improvement, if there has been any, has not been striking. It would appear also that, with the restricted course of lessons, there has been much less reading of history than before. There is a distinct loss here, for, whether the children were acquiring historical knowledge or not, they were at least getting additional practice in reading, which was a good thing in itself.

*Science and Object Lessons.*—The teachers have done their best to give their scholars some knowledge of elementary science. In a good many schools the character of the instruction has been worthy of commendation, and it may be said that in all the schools the pupils have acquired a good deal of useful information. Object-lessons of a kind have been given in all the lower classes. It is not easy to give a good object-lesson. A good many teachers forget this, and very often what passes for an object-lesson with them is so only in name. A certain amount of information is im-