

acquiring so much of this and so much of that. True education may be compared to a varied landscape over which the pupils are to be taken to face every now and again new features from a new point of view. It is just in enabling his pupils to gain the right point of view in attacking difficulties and new subjects that much of the teacher's art consists. Not till he has attained the right point of view can a pupil pierce the husk and reach the kernel of a subject. The following idea contains, we believe, the germs of a method of counteracting the narrowing tendencies of specialisation. For a few minutes after assembly each morning the teacher might quietly talk over with the children some interesting item of news. point out the beauties of a simple verse from his favourite poet; unveil the hidden meaning of a moral maxim, recount some stirring event or describe some famous scene far off or near, state and explain a fact from among the many wonders of science, bring under their notice the great event or great man of which or of whom the day is the anniversary. Such a plan would occupy but a few minutes of the school day, it would lead the pupils to feel that, though geography and grammar as such may be distasteful, knowledge is fascinating; and it might further be made the means of convincing them that, though school discipline may be irksome, it is full of purpose.

In dealing with the methods of instruction appertaining to specific subjects we shall begin with the infant departments. Here is to be found one of the most hopeful signs of educational activity in the district. Slowly but surely rational methods are ousting the routine of other years, and the seeds of a movement destined sooner or later to revolutionise the teacher's art are silently taking root at the first and critical period of the school life of our pupils. The central idea of the kindergarten work now carried on in our best schools is that doing should go hand in hand with learning. The eye is trained to discriminate number colour form, and size the ear, tone and pitch, and the hand, weight and texture while all these powers of discrimination are turned to practical account in the performing of a multitude of constructive exercises. If in its infancy and in its but very partial adoption it is so abundantly fruitful, the system, when matured and universal, will produce in the training of children results of which one can now form but a very faint conception.

To turn to the standard classes. As a means of general culture the reading-lesson often falls sadly short of the ideal. In so far as it consists in converting printed signs into sounds it is indeed moderately successful, though even in this respect there is room for immense improvement in some schools. But the reading-lesson has a larger purpose, it should enlist the pupils' sympathy in the thought and in the spirit of the language, brim over with interesting references, and tend to beget in the pupils both the desire and the ability to acquire information from sources other than such as are to be found within the four walls of a schoolroom. There is grave reason to fear that writing is frequently taught in a more or less slipshod and incidental manner. When the percentage craze dominated schoolwork teachers were no doubt tempted to make writing not an end in itself, but merely a means of acquisition of knowledge in other directions. There is now no need for intemperate haste writing should be taught as an end as well as a means. The principles should be carefully explained in set lessons composition, exercise, slate-work, and exercise-books will afford the necessary practice. In future we shall feel ourselves obliged to censure alike unmethodic teaching, as well as careless work on the part of the pupils, whether in copy-books, exercise-books, or on slates. Some of the schools did excellent work in drawing. In teaching this subject many teachers habitually miss the opportunity of giving it a practical turn, pupils have consequently a dislike for it simply because they fail to see in it any practical purpose. Now that teachers have had time to familiarise themselves with the demands of the department in this subject we shall expect substantial compliance with the requirements on the part of all the pupils. Spelling continues to be, on the whole, well taught, though during the course of our inspection of the schools we met with some astonishing instances of careless method, or, rather, of the total absence of method. No endeavour was made either to thoroughly correct errors or to impress the correct forms of words in the pupils' minds. Such teaching is, of course, worse than useless. Arithmetic is well taught in the majority of the schools. In this subject the teacher's tendency to specialise is seen in its worst form in the elevating of each rule to a position independent of, if not in actual conflict with, every other. This dignifying of rules destroys any love for, or command over, the subject a pupil might have, for when brought face to face with a problem he must needs first settle the rule by which it is to be worked, often a more serious difficulty than the solution of the problem. If teachers would only impress on children the fact that arithmetic is merely common-sense expressed in figures the subject would appear far less formidable. The children should also be encouraged to bring to school for explanation by the teacher clippings from the newspapers containing share lists and the state of the local, colonial, and Home markets. Geography is poorly taught by a great many teachers. The usual method of teaching it appears to be to place a text-book in the pupil's hand, with the request that he should commit its contents to memory, and to supplement this by a series of questions more or less perfunctory. This amounts to little more than the dreary conning of the arid wastes of place-names on the part of the pupil. In this subject the teacher must be very careful about the point of view he selects, for in no other is the interdependence of facts and principles more close in no other is there more frequent need for an appeal to the general body of the pupil's knowledge. Nor must the practical bearings of the subject be lost sight of for a moment. Pupils should be encouraged to bring to school extracts from the newspapers in which are involved questions of local, colonial, and foreign geography, as well as extracts regarding shipping news and mail routes. In many of our schools the teaching of composition leaves little to be desired. In some, however, pupils have presented sentences showing an almost total disregard of capital letters and full stops—matters in themselves perhaps trivial, but indicative of gross slovenliness notwithstanding. In this subject set lessons should be given, incidents from history, studies in geography, and biography from general sources will afford abundant practice. Grammatical errors made in composition exercises should be dealt with during the grammar lesson, as pupils require all the time usually given to composition to acquire freedom of expression.