

far to employ such artifices and when to dispense with them. The moment that concrete illustrations have served their purpose they should be discarded." At examination time we frequently have to complain of the illogical manner in which the steps of the working of the examples are set out. The solution of a problem involves an exercise in logic, and it is but reasonable to expect that the steps by which the answer is obtained should conform to the methods of logic. Mental arithmetic is still a weak subject in most schools.

Composition continues to vary very widely in quality, but in the majority of schools it is a weak subject. If we may judge from the exercises we examine, no inconsiderable proportion of our children are unable to write from fifteen to twenty lines, even on a prepared subject, without making one or more gross blunders in grammar. They use possessive cases for plurals, and plurals for possessive cases, double possessives for possessives ("your's" for "yours," "her's" for "hers," "it's" for "its"), singular nouns with plural verbs, and singular verbs with plural nouns, the pronoun "their" for the adverb "there," the preposition "to" for the adverb "too," the past tense for the past participle, and *vice versa*. These errors are not confined to Standards III. and IV.; they frequently occur in the work of Standard V. and Standard VI., and, indeed, are not unknown in that of pupil-teachers. Composition is, we know, a very difficult subject to teach; and with children, errors, even gross errors, in arrangement, are, in spite of good teaching, sure to occur; but we do not think the children's capacity to blunder should be regarded as a sufficient excuse for errors such as those specified above. They undoubtedly indicate inefficient or insufficient teaching in grammar. The remedy is obvious: intelligent and systematic drill in grammar and in the correction of errors of the kinds most frequently occurring in the written and *spoken* speech of the children. We are sure that thorough and systematic drill in the correction of such errors would effect great improvement in the composition of all the classes, and especially of Standards III. and IV. In most of our schools oral composition is almost entirely neglected, the teachers seldom exacting from the children full and well-expressed answers to their questions. It is, no doubt, difficult to get children to talk, but the difficulty does not relieve us from the duty of compelling them to try. Nor should we always be satisfied with answers given in simple sentences. In their confidential chat with one another they frequently use sentences consisting of two or three clauses, and they should be encouraged to do the same in their spoken answers to their teachers. Persistent and well-directed practice in oral composition could not fail to improve the written exercises, and to remedy what is at present a serious defect in most of our schools—the speechlessness of the children in oral lessons. Punctuation continues to be exceedingly faulty. To children well drilled in sentence-structure, the proper employment of the comma, semicolon, and period should not be difficult; but this is precisely the department of instruction in which they are not well drilled, and, therefore, working without guiding principles, many of them point their composition exercises most faultily. Not a few teachers continue the useless—we had almost written stupid—practice of correcting the errors of their pupils instead of simply marking them and training their pupils to correct them. In our best schools the teachers indicate by well-understood marks the nature of the errors, enter the more important errors in a note-book, and at some future time place them on the black-board and make them the subject of a good lesson in grammar and composition. They then make the children correct their own errors. This is acting on the principle that what the children do for themselves is of immensely greater importance to them than what their teachers do for them. The principle is sound, and we commend it to those who vainly cherish the notion that children pay attention to the corrections that are made for them.

In Standard III. the prescribed grammar was generally well known; in Standard IV. it was not so well known; and in Standards V. and VI., though there was some improvement on last year's work, there was a large amount of very inferior answering. The course of grammar prescribed by the department appears to us to be faulty. Instead of beginning with the classification of the ultimate parts (single words) of the sentence, the course should undoubtedly begin with the study of the main parts of the sentence—in technical phraseology, the logical subject and the logical predicate. The beginner should first be trained to observe that every simple statement consists of two parts—one part denoting the thing or things spoken of, and the other what is said about the thing or things; and, when this is vividly realised, he should learn to call the first the subject, the second the predicate. From this logical analysis of simple statements the child should proceed to the function and classification of the words forming the subject and the predicate. For the sake of composition, prominence should be given to what is technically known as the agreement between the nominative and its verb, and the pronoun and its antecedent; and there should be given for correction copious examples of departure from this agreement, and abundant exercise in writing original sentences after given models. This would form a suitable course for Standard III. In the higher standards the instruction should follow the same lines, and here should be added inflexion and its uses, the study of equivalent constructions, and the meaning and function of connectives. The relation of clause to clause and of sentence to sentence is one of great importance, and the study of this relation is even more important than that of the elements of the clause, for upon the perception of it depends the reader's power of understanding a sentence of some complexity, or of gathering up the value of the paragraph. The relations of the sentences of the paragraph are, so far as we have observed, seldom considered. For purposes of grammar, every sentence of it is considered as a principal, and is studied as a thing apart from its context. A good sentence has, of course, a felicity of its own apart from its setting in the paragraph; but its setting in the paragraph is as worthy of study as is the setting of the constituent clauses of the sentence. It is a serious blunder to regard every sentence as a principal, for the sentences of a well-built paragraph are, like the clauses of a sentence, interdependent, and come under the laws that regulate the clauses of the sentence: they are not so many co-ordinate independent units; their relations to one another are much the same as those of their own clauses, and without a perception of this mutual bearing one cannot appreciate the value of the paragraph. "The art of speaking and writing the English