

at this stage. In all the classes above Standard III. the written answers are too commonly bald, indefinite, and poorly set out. The faults of the written answers are the ordinary faults of oral answering, and they are to be remedied by using more freely and more intelligently varied recapitulatory examinations to be answered in writing. All answers that are unsatisfactorily stated in these exercises should be written out anew in proper form. In this way pupils would be trained to make their written answers more representative of their knowledge, and we should cease to have to complain of such palpable omissions as the names of the countries in which the places that are being described are situated. I think it most desirable that the Education Department should issue a detailed syllabus of what each standard class should have to study, and believe that a clear definition of the work would be of the greatest benefit. On the whole, physical geography is but moderately taught in Standards V. and VI. The knowledge of the causes of the seasons is especially disappointing, and few pupils can sketch simple diagrams to show the limits of solar illumination at the different seasons. The influences affecting climate are also less clearly and correctly stated than we think they might be. Outline maps, too, should be better done. There is, however, a considerable number of schools in which geography is well taught, but it does not increase as rapidly as one could wish.

Reading continues to improve, and in the great majority of the schools it is as good as we can expect it to be. In a few schools it is not fluent enough, in a larger number it is low and deficient in natural expression, but on the whole it is of satisfactory quality. Mr. Crowe reports a less satisfactory state of instruction than prevails in the other Inspectors' districts. For this irregular attendance may partly account, but this explanation does not seem to me sufficient.

The explanation of the language of the prose lessons and of the poetry committed to memory receives year by year more careful attention, though much remains to be done in this direction. In a large number of schools the difficult passages are clearly and readily explained. There are here several faults of teaching to be remedied. Explanations need to be better impressed by recapitulation and the use of the blackboard. Preparatory study should be encouraged more, and be more systematically tested, for which careful previous preparation by teachers is indispensable. Explanations are often deficient in precision, and they should be more quickly dealt with. They should also deal with expressions that are worthy of consideration and present real difficulty of comprehension. In the lower classes much time is wasted in paraphrasing expressions that are already as simple and easily comprehensible as they can be made. Next to arithmetic this is the subject in which thoroughness of instruction is most frequently noted as still a desideratum.

The passes recorded in writing and drawing show that the Inspectors are fully satisfied with the teaching of these subjects, and I need note only that the writing in exercise-books, and sometimes on slates, does not conform as closely to the style taught in the copybooks as it should. This matter demands constant attention. Head-teachers and class-teachers should see to it themselves, and not leave it so much in the hands of pupil-teachers as they commonly do. I think pupil-teachers in the larger schools are engaged far too much in work of this kind, and that home-written exercises are too extensively used in many of our schools to be compatible with good writing.

Spelling and dictation have been well taught during the year, except in Standards III. and IV. The passes in this subject are but little below those in reading, and the results are quite satisfactory.

The composition exercises have shown a decided improvement in the division of the matter into sentences, and the work in this subject generally has been advancing. The attempt to roughly define the standard to be expected has done a good deal of good. There is still occasion to complain of the prevalence of long, rambling, unwieldy sentences in the exercises of the higher standards. Teachers must be more earnest and insistent in checking this fault. New arrangements have been adopted for the examinations in this subject, and I hope that the new test for Standard IV. will encourage a better knowledge of the structure of easy sentences, and lead to the use of sentences that are shorter, clearer, and less involved. It is very necessary that the "outlines" used for this class should not give the pupils too much assistance, or suggest the length of the sentences except in the earlier exercises. They should consist only of short phrases and single words, and throw on the pupils the entire burden of combining them and filling them out into sentences. I make these remarks because I have lately seen the "outlines" badly drawn up and unskillfully used in a number of the smaller schools. I have some anxiety as to the results of a test in paraphrasing in Standard VI., because our scholarship and pupil-teacher candidates seldom show any power in dealing with such exercises. To give in other language the sense of a passage of verse constitutes a fine test of intelligence and insight; and our teachers will need to see that their most advanced pupils are acquiring the width of understanding, the sympathy, and the imagination that are required to cope with this exercise.

It was not without regret that the former arrangements for examining composition were set aside. In the hands of skilful and competent teachers they led to good work, but they left too much scope for cram, and in many schools the writing of an original essay on a familiar subject was degenerating into a feat of memory.

The class-subjects continue to receive a sufficient share of attention, by which I mean as full treatment as the present congested condition of the syllabus will permit. Grammar, science, and object-lessons are the most important of them. Grammar is satisfactorily taught in a large minority of the schools, including most of the larger ones. Elsewhere the subject is taught with care and diligence, but with little skill or intelligence. This indifferent handling of one of the best means of education in the teacher's hands is, I fancy, primarily due to want of interest in the subject and to a knowledge of our language so limited as to make teachers depend too much on text-books and use them in a routine way. Many of the defects of the teaching are directly traceable to the text-books, and especially to a very poor but venerable text-book that is regarded with