

need for every class in every school is a set of readers for sight-reading during the last four or five months of the year. In each set there should be about half as many books as pupils in the class; they should be the property of the Committee, should never be taken out of the school, and should be simply read, the aim being to accustom the children to read readily, in new contexts, words they are already familiar with and, by showing what pleasure can be got out of a book, to create and foster a taste for reading. We are glad to be able to report that some Committees are already making provision for the introduction of such readers in their schools. For the two senior classes we recommend a good English classic, such as, say, "Westward Ho!" or "Ivanhoe," or Southey's "Life of Nelson," or another of the many well-executed cheap reprints recently issued by British publishing-houses.

The verses prepared for recital were generally said with verbal and phrasal accuracy, but not with much taste and spirit. Whether charged with galloping energy, or stormy passion, or tender pathos, they were too often recited with no expression of the thing infused into them by the mind of the poet. The repetition of poetry without the expression of its spirit is of little educational value. The bearing of recitation upon gesture and voice-modulation as means of expressing the emotions appears to us not to be kept sufficiently in view. Our experience has convinced us that recitation and reading receive too little prominence in the professional training of our teachers. We think the Board would do well to establish in Dunedin a Saturday elocution class for pupil-teachers and students in training, thus doing for elocution what it has already done for drawing and gymnastics. The expense of such a class would be a trifle in comparison with the good it would achieve.

There is next to no teaching of spelling, but it is clear from the efficiency marks that the spelling of the reading-books is well worked up by the children. It is, however, no uncommon thing for them to do well in the formal test and blunder badly in the spelling of their composition and geography. To teachers the remedy should be obvious.

During the year the work of which is under review penmanship was, from Standard III. to Standard VI. inclusive, judged from the writing of the dictation exercise, and the efficiency mark shows that the schools stood the test well.

Drawing was, for the most part, judged from work done in our presence. A fair proportion of it was excellent, and much of the rest was good. More practice in drawing from objects, say, from a leaf instead of from the figure of one, would greatly increase the usefulness and interest of this subject. Some teachers do not observe the rule that in freehand drawing no mechanical aids should be used.

So far as blackboard exposition goes, written arithmetic continues to be one of the most efficiently taught subjects. In the three senior classes, however, the examination results are frequently disappointing to all concerned. The failures are due to many causes, the chief being, in our opinion, the following: (1.) Many teachers do not make their pupils set out the logical steps of the work as they themselves set them out in the blackboard proofs. (2.) They do not, after proving general laws, make their pupils learn the words in which such laws are usually expressed; there is inadequate mastery of proofs and explanations, insufficient working-up of the language of arithmetic, reliance being placed on mere ciphering, the working of examples, no matter how, to fix in the minds of the children what is explained, generally well explained, by the teacher. This is analogous to teaching Euclid's elements without making the learners work up the proofs and memorise the general enunciation of the propositions! In every subject the parts of which have a logical connection there must be memorising of verbal statements of important principles or the learner never gets beyond vague general notions, can never give a clear accurate reason for the work he does. Formerly we had too much learning of rules without explanation and proof; now we have too much explanation and proof and too little learning of rules and explanations. The latter case is nearly as bad as the former. (3.) The children are not kept on their mettle. Teachers anticipate difficulties and explain them away without allowing their pupils to encounter them, struggle with them, and try to overcome them. They have a great deal of work to compass and they make undue haste to compass it, not realising that he makes most haste who makes haste slowly. Too much assistance is more harmful than too little, for the child that is helped over every difficulty and afforded no chance of testing his own power to overcome it will always remain a weakling, always collapse before a problem that differs in any way from those he has, with the assistance of his teacher, been accustomed to solve. (4.) It is assumed that it is the work of the lower standards to produce accuracy in the simple rules, and that the accuracy acquired in Standard I. to Standard II. requires little or no effort from the teachers of the middle and senior classes to make it a permanent mental possession. Hence their pupils frequently fail from inaccuracy in the simple rules, especially in addition. The remedy is frequent brief practice in long tots and other devices for securing and maintaining rapidity and accuracy. Five minutes a day devoted to this class of work would work wonders. Another cause operates in the case of the more capable children: their pace is too often regulated by that of the dullards, the aim being not to make every child master as thoroughly as he can the parts of the subject prescribed for him, but to qualify for a pass every member of the class. The weak are, the strong are not, made to do their best; there is levelling-up of the former, but levelling-down of the latter. Dull children need a good deal of explanation and assistance, bright children, but little, and it is worse than waste of time to compel the latter to listen to all the explanations given to the former. Capable children would rather help themselves than be helped by others, and should therefore be allowed to work from their books while their less capable class-mates are receiving blackboard instruction. The bare level of a pass is as high as, perhaps higher than, a fair proportion of the children can reach even with the best teaching; but quite a large proportion are capable of working right through their books and of attaining to excellence in the work prescribed. It is better to work through a poor text-book than to work a little here and a little there of a good one with the view not of learning through and through the work prescribed, but simply of catching the examiner and