

it. As far as possible, the occurrence of mistakes should only be marked by teachers, and the correction should be supplied by the writers of the exercises. A set of marks indicating the kind of mistake (for school-children's mistakes can be reduced to a comparatively few classes), and understood by teachers and pupils, might be introduced with great advantage. The reason for every correction should be made so clear that the pupils can understand and restate it, and apply the same principle to similar cases. The examination of composition exercises should never be intrusted to junior pupil-teachers, nor to any one else than the class-teacher and the head-teacher. Not less than one subject a week should be dealt with in every class, and the subjects should be largely different for successive standards. In the larger schools additional subjects should be treated in outline, the heads and arrangement alone being considered. On the walls of every school-room should appear a list of forty or fifty composition subjects for the use of each of the classes in the room, and the lists should be so placed that pupils can consult them with little trouble. Besides this, the subjects of oncoming composition-lessons should always be announced a week before, that the pupils may gather a store of knowledge about the subjects set. With all subjects that are not familiar to the children, rapid, and not too narrow, oral questioning about the topics should be employed as a preparatory exercise, and now and then heads might be worked out at the blackboard as models for the pupils. This preparatory work needs to be smartly dealt with both by teachers and by pupils, and with skilful handling the latter can be got to do very much of it without material help or explanation from the teacher.

As a rule, paraphrasing was poorly done, though there were some creditable exceptions in nearly every school. I intend to discontinue the use of this exercise until we get for the upper classes a set of reading-books with a better selection of poetry. When resumed it will be confined to passages chosen from the series of reading-books in the pupils' hands.

Grammar is in general satisfactorily taught in Standards III. and IV. so far as simple parsing goes, but the knowledge of inflections is still more backward than it might be. In Standards V. and VI. parsing is becoming more and more slow and inaccurate, and mistakes in classing the parts of speech are by no means unusual even in the highest class. In most schools a small proportion of the pupils have gained a considerable knowledge of what is taught, but the majority, and usually the great majority, of their class-fellows know very little about the subject, and are entirely indifferent to it. Here, as in writing, it is feeble discipline, rather than want of care and skill on the part of teachers, that is responsible for the gravely unsatisfactory state of the instruction. In the small schools this is less noticeable. I am now satisfied that it was a mistake to rank grammar as a class-subject, and I regret that I supported the change. Under the system of oral examination teachers and Inspectors too have been largely imposed on, the merit of a few good scholars cloaking the defects of the mass of their class-fellows. An appeal to a brief written examination in Standards V. and VI. has fully satisfied me of this. The bad work seemed to be equally a revelation to the class-teachers. I hope the unpleasant exposures we have so often encountered during the past year will lead to greater thoroughness and more systematic testing of the teaching by written exercises. Much of the dryness of this study is due to overdoing routine parsing. When a fair foundation has been laid it would probably be better to deal with particular points in the parsing of single words, and have reasons given for the answers. This would lessen the deadening routine even if it does not add interest to the work.

Analysis, though better known than parsing, was, on the whole, barely satisfactory. It is to be regretted that the analysis of compound sentences should be omitted from the syllabus. Why should analysis, in Standard VI., not deal with easily understood sentences containing three or four statements, whether these show the relations characteristic of complex or of compound sentences? The grand considerations in all analysis are two, and two only—the number of clauses or statements, and the relations of these to one another as co-ordinate or subordinate. These matters are as easy to recognise and describe in compound sentences as in complex ones. All the other details are easy to see, and of less significance.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the teaching of geography, and the written answers have, in general, been more fully and better set out. Mathematical geography is, however, still poorly understood. This topic is singularly ill-suited for treatment in the elementary school. Much time is spent on it to very little purpose, because the interaction of the various conditions is too complicated for immature minds to clearly and easily apprehend their working. It would be a gain if it were thrown out of the syllabus altogether. In its place we might well have an elementary study of geographical changes that are going on under our eyes, such as the formation of cliffs, bays, and sandhills; the eating-out of valleys; the formation of gravel and sand; the filling-up of lake-basins and nearly level valleys by gravel, sand, and alluvium; the effects of floods; the deposition of the varied strata that compose the earth's crust; and kindred topics. The study of such subjects would afford ample scope for the practice of observation and inference, would minister far more to the training of the intelligence, and would draw out and strengthen the strong "naturalist" interest that is dormant in us all.

Of history Mr. Goodwin writes, "I can see very little value in the teaching of history in our schools. The disjointed and fragmentary way in which the events are generally arranged in the programmes prepared can be of little use to children. Even in the rare instances where a well-thought-out lesson, enriched with the results of mature and ample reading, is given I fear that few scholars carry away with them more than a very vague idea of its true scope and meaning. I think it would be better if the pupils read regularly some suitable text-book, and were questioned afterwards to ascertain if they remembered and really understood what they read." Mr. Grierson says, "Though the teachers go religiously through a course of lessons, I am afraid they make very little lasting impression on the minds of their pupils. The reading of a suitable historical text-book would, I think, be attended by much better results." To this I may add that the few dates taught are seldom thoroughly known by more than a minority of the pupils. The teaching of history by