

individual criticism and direction without waste of time. The engraved copybook should be retained. If the teacher has made a wise choice the models will be excellent; they will be of the exact size for reproduction, and they will be immediately before the pupil's eye. We believe that the amount of writing done during the writing interval should be at least doubled, and under this system it would be doubled. Teachers need not be afraid of the pupil's blunders in the blank copybook. The blank copybook will show method, the engraved book results. Whatever style of writing is practised in a school, the teachers should insist on the writers maintaining the attitude of body and position of hand and pen proper to the style: apart from its bearing on the acquisition of the art of writing, a habitual good attitude may prove of life-long importance to the writer.

In spite of adverse circumstances, written arithmetic earned the efficiency mark that was earned last year. This indicates that advance was made in the subject. Some schools and some pupils lost heavily from inattention to rational working methods and methodical setting-out of their work. Except in purely mechanical sums half-value was given for good method, even where the answers were wrong. A pupil, nervous under examination, may blunder in addition or subtraction; but, if he has been habitually methodical throughout the year, his method will almost certainly be good in examination, and half-value may give him the reward of his year's good work. Slovenly work, even on the slate, should never be tolerated. The mental arithmetic results do not indicate advance. During inspection we had frequently to disapprove of the teaching, if teaching it might be called. In much of the work we saw there was evident want of preparation for the lesson, of design in the lesson, and of discipline in the work. To dictate half a dozen sums, to ask the pupils to read their half-dozen answers, to count the number of pupils with one sum right, two right, three right, &c., and to express approval and disapproval, is not teaching mental arithmetic—it is not even testing reliably what has been taught. There should be some well-defined purpose to serve by the lesson, some principle to elucidate and put into practice, some working method to practise till accuracy and facility are attained.

The teaching of composition is improving. Owing to circumstances already detailed, there was naturally a good deal of poor work; but, on the other hand, there was a considerable quantity of good work. Glaring mistakes were fewer in number; concord and government were more accurately observed; evidence was given that analysis of sentences had been turned to practical account. Oral composition, in the form of conversation-lessons and of answering in sentences, receives in the lower classes increasing attention. Benefit has been derived from the improved treatment of comprehension of the subject-matter of the reading-books, especially from the formation by the pupils of sentences embodying the new words of the reading-lesson, and from the expression of meanings by phrases or sentences rather than by synonyms. It has been said that the New Zealand system of education has killed imagination in the children. We supplied the subjects for the composition by placing before the children previously unseen suggestive pictures. The children's task was to write stories appropriate to the pictures, and many good and highly original stories were written for us. The children drew freely on their personal experiences, on their stores of natural history, political history, geography, &c., and used in some cases with considerable skill the mechanism of the fairy tale. Their compositions proved conclusively that the imagination, reproductive and constructive, is in tolerable working order.

The efficiency mark for geography stands on the margin of "fair." Political and commercial geography were good; mathematical and physical geography were unsatisfactory, and brought down the average mark.

Grammar continues to improve, and the number of schools in which it is made an effective aid to reading and composition is increasing.

Improvement is being made in the method of science-teaching. The teacher's programme of science-lessons, previously approved by an Inspector, defines the scope of the science examination. A list of the objects observed and of the experiments performed during the course of the year would be a valuable addition to the programme. If sufficient in number and variety these experiments and objects would still further define the scope of the examination, and tend to produce results satisfactory to all concerned. When the elements of agricultural knowledge are chosen instead of elementary science, we expect to find the children interested in the agricultural and horticultural work of the neighbourhood.

Needlework maintains its high standard of efficiency. In January last the needlework schedule of 1894 was cancelled, and another brought into force. In the examinations of this year the needlework presented may be as prescribed in either schedule. If the work presented is in accordance with the new schedule, the efficiency of the pupils may be tested by work done during the examinations, and materials must be at hand for the purpose. According to the cancelled schedule knitting was optional, and many of our schools presented not only the full tale of excellent needlework, but a large amount of creditable knitting. We regret that knitting is not even mentioned in the new schedule.

Drill and exercises, including gymnastics in schools provided with apparatus, are regarded as equal in value to any literary subject of the syllabus. To obtain such value, evidence must be given of their effective bearing on class movements, and on the physical development and the carriage of the pupils, both boys and girls; during the exercises the movements must be prompt, exact, and vigorous, whether following the word of command or keeping time to a musical accompaniment; during the drill military discipline must be observed, and the movements must be made without preliminary instructions. The circular of the 9th August, 1898, defining drill and exercises is now in operation. A gymnasium is a class-room of the school to which it belongs; and, as in other class-rooms, there must be affixed to the wall a time-table showing the work done in the gymnasium, the teachers in charge of the work, and the times at which the work is done.

It may be observed that values comparatively high have been given to order, attention, and manners. We are dealing with formation of character, the most important of all school functions,