

was a tendency "to race," with the consequent imperfect enunciation and neglect of the phrasal accent. There was a relatively small percentage of failure in this subject, but the schools in which the reading was classed as "excellent" were few.

SPELLING.—Part of the spelling is judged in connection with composition—*e.g.*, the use of *there, their; were, where; as, has; to, two, too*; and the use of the apostrophe. I noticed in several instances spelling tests in exercise-books with several unmarked errors—a serious fault which indicates imperfect supervision. By leaving the pupil's error uncorrected the mistake is harder to remedy, for in a subject that depends largely on eye and ear a false collocation has been set up and allowed time to establish itself. The exercises in word-building make this subject more attractive. In some quarters, however, this is limited to the mere spelling of the built word without use of it in a sentence. This may certainly obtain correct spelling and an apparent saving in time; but the saving is only apparent. By using the word in a sentence it becomes an instrument of thought, and thus both formal and material considerations receive due weight; spelling becomes correlated with composition; the lesson becomes an exercise in both subjects; each subject at once throws light on the other, and adds to its interest. This is a great gain.

WRITING.—In most schools copybook writing is satisfactory, and in many it is very good. General writing on slates, or in notebooks, in a good many instances receives less attention than it should. In several schools the time allowed for writing was too short to admit of teaching properly the forms of the letters. Every letter has its characteristic errors, and these should be incessantly illustrated and corrected on the blackboard—exaggerated if necessary—until they cease to appear. If one may judge by their own handwriting a number of young teachers and prospective teachers have an inadequate idea of the importance of this subject. In two of the larger schools this class of work improved considerably during the year. Even the children can appreciate improvement in a mechanic art like this. They find that thoroughness wins in the end, and so habits are formed that have pleasant reflexes in the discipline and tone of the schools.

COMPOSITION.—A remark made above has a bearing on the observed treatment of this subject. Sometimes I was shown work done by the pupils on which promotion was to be based, and in which questions relating to clauses and phrases were either carelessly or ignorantly allowed marks, although quite wrong. The results in composition were least gratifying last year, and I expected improvement. In this I was not disappointed, but, considering that the Board has supplied free the complete English tests for the last three years, there is still a very great weakness in grammar. I hope to see the difficulties under this head grappled with earnestly during the current year. In the syllabus the use of the terms "subject," "predicate," &c., is discouraged in the lower standards. The trouble that used to present itself to the teacher was not so much in the use of these names as in the request for the definition of them. A precise definition sometimes calls for a faculty of abstraction with which the child is ill equipped. The use of roundabout phraseology for *subject* and *predicate* simply presents this difficulty in a new form. A child may have a working idea of a "subject" and a "predicate" just as he may have of a "kangaroo" and a "rhinoceros" without being able to give in the language of logic or of zoology the connotation of the terms, and as their use conduces to conciseness of expression and a focussing of the attention it seems advisable to employ them. Free oral discussion, of which our American friends make so much use, is not yet a strong feature of the composition lesson in our schools. Some teachers are still satisfied with very short essays.

ARITHMETIC.—In dealing with this subject there are two bad methods in vogue: (1.) The teacher tends to lecture too much. There is a tremendous difference between the teacher's telling the class how to work a sum and the class's telling the teacher. The teacher's lecture may be a necessary preliminary, but some imagine the subject has been taught when so much is accomplished. As a matter of fact that is only the groundwork, even though in the course of it a number of sums have been worked completely through. American teachers use the word "recitation," not meaning the repetition of poetry, but as a lesson of questioning and free oral discussion on any subject. The pupil takes his full share in the questioning and discussion, and the teacher does not feel put out thereby. Hence there is the recitation lesson in history, the recitation of geography, the recitation of arithmetic. This aspect of the arithmetic lesson needs development. The pupil knows his subject when he can explain it to the teacher. He may know very little of it if the only stage accomplished is the teacher's explanation to the pupil. The teacher is recommended to read Professor Adams on the difference between "judging" and "thinking," p. 100, "Herbartian Psychology applied to Education"; D. Heath, London; 3/6. (2.) Sufficient use is not made of the concrete. How many teachers take forth their children to measure a chain, a furlong, a mile, an acre, an acre in different shapes, similarly with the metric and other measurements. There is a subject on the Manual and Technical Syllabus, "Elementary Physical Measurements" (see also School Syllabus, paragraph 55). The portion of this that constitutes concrete arithmetic might well be introduced into the syllabus of that subject. The teacher must, however, remember that the concrete presentation of his subject is useful only as it leads up to the abstract—*e.g.*, in Class II, "A boy places in his empty pocket 6 marbles, and then 5 more: how many are there in his pocket altogether?" This lesson is not finished till the pupil understands that six and five make eleven, irrespective of marbles. The concrete is the type of lesson at inspection. The abstract is the type at examination. The latter should have been arrived at through the former. Unless there is a continual recourse to the real the imagination of the child is apt to run away at unexpected tangents—*e.g.*, in the history lesson a girl told me "The Black Hole of Calcutta had a window that was no bigger than a penny postage-stamp." In Standard I the teacher need not treat of numbers proceeding beyond 100. By one education journal circulating in New Zealand and containing examination tests this fact is overlooked. There is sufficient scope within the limit of 100 to give the teacher a full year's work. So, too, within the number 1,000 for Standard II, with money sums up to £20. In some schools the liberty to use a classification in arithmetic different from that adopted in English is availed of rather too freely. This leads to difficulties in Standard VI.