

*Recitation.*—In spite of all that has been said in recent years, recitation still remains one of the least satisfactory subjects in many of our schools; indeed, it is sometimes difficult to understand why the subject appears on the time-table at all, so perfunctorily is it taught. In recitation the psychological difficulty of translating the written symbol into terms of sound is absent; the quality of recitation, therefore, should be considerably higher than that of reading, yet in many schools it is much lower. Moreover, here is the lesson in which control of the vocal organs can best be secured; here, too, the pupils may acquire some knowledge of that quiet self-control, that art of correct breathing, that modulation of tone, that speed of utterance, which will become of such service to them in their efforts to read and to speak with force and expression. It is quite depressing at times to be obliged to listen to the mutilation of beautiful thoughts expressed in beautiful words; and one finds it difficult to escape from the conviction that many teachers have in some way failed to appreciate the significance and importance of recitation, and so have lost and are still losing valuable opportunities for child-training.

*Composition and English.*—We have written at some length on this subject in recent reports, and have but little further to add. In the large schools written exercises in composition are highly creditable, and give evidence of careful and sympathetic teaching. In many of the country schools, however, the results are disappointing, and point to faulty and deficient treatment. We have frequently noticed that the quality of the exercises submitted does not rise appreciably through the standards: for instance, commendable work presented by Standard II or Standard III is not followed by equally commendable work in the three upper classes; and exercises submitted by Standard VI show but little advance on those submitted by Standard IV in matter, arrangement, and vocabulary. There seems no adequate reason why these conditions should obtain, and we attribute their appearance to want of efficient guidance on the part of the teachers when pupils leave the lower classes. In these classes oral composition is the rule; in the upper classes we fear it becomes the exception. Composition, moreover, is a subject that demands careful teaching, and yet in the upper classes of many of our schools but little time is devoted to showing the senior pupils how to set about dealing systematically and adequately with the subjects under review. More use in these schools should be made of the blackboard in leading pupils to realize how the evolution of thought can be encouraged, its arrangement improved, and its expression acquired. To this end model compositions worked out on the blackboard by teacher and class should be of frequent occurrence, and oral composition should form part of every lesson in all parts of the school. That portion of the subject coming under the head of English shows but little improvement; the defects to which we drew attention in our last report still continue. We can only hope that the causes which give rise to the undesirable effects noted may gradually be removed, and that teachers may come to realize that English is merely a means to an end—the end being the ability to express one's thoughts in spoken or written words with fluency and clearness, and, if possible, with some approach to elegance of diction.

*Arithmetic.*—This subject remains practically in the condition noted during the previous year, a result attributable probably to the course outlined in the syllabus, a course so wide that it is difficult to do justice to it except at the expense of other subjects. It is hoped that the changes foreshadowed in the amended regulations will afford much-needed relief. Number-work in the preparatory classes was frequently disappointing. In some cases the numbers dealt with were quite beyond the comprehension of pupils; in others the knowledge of the composition of numbers was meagre in the extreme; in others again an altogether insufficient time had been devoted to impressing the results derived from the manipulation of concrete objects. In the standard classes mental arithmetic was not always a pleasing feature, in that calculations were lacking in rapidity and were frequently inaccurate. Though it is highly desirable that mental work should precede and accompany instruction in all operations dealing with new rules, a certain amount of time should be regularly devoted to revision (mental revision) of rules already mastered. To this omission may be attributed some at least of the inability to deal readily and effectively with the simple mental tests applied during the course of our visits. In some schools the courses in arithmetic have been too hurriedly covered, with the result that towards the end of the year constant revision has robbed the subject of all stimulating interest. The method, or want of method, in setting out the solution of simple problems calls for special attention. Some teachers appear to forget that the method of solution is quite as important as the answer, and that the training in expressing in clear and logical sequence the successive steps in a chain of reasoning is an all-important matter. The corollary of careful statement and neat working is accuracy and rapidity.

*Geography.*—The remarks made in recent reports still apply to the teaching of this subject: Course A is gradually receiving somewhat less and Course B somewhat greater attention. We still find teachers that are unable to deal with physical geography, even in its elementary stages, without the aid of the text-book, who ignore the possibilities of practical treatment which nature in many cases has so lavishly placed at their very doors. It is not unusual to find children able to give formal definitions of "basin," "erosion," &c., as applied to rivers, and yet unable to give an intelligent account of the action of the stream flowing past the school. We would again repeat what has so often been said—that much of this subject should be regarded as a form of nature-study, which loses greatly in value as a means of training if not treated in such a way as to lead pupils to realize that it deals with changes in operation around them, that they themselves can observe and interpret. We rarely find, moreover, that the relations between physical, political, and commercial geography have been sufficiently emphasized, or that the principle of cause and effect has been sufficiently applied to explain such matters as the presence of certain products, the existence of certain industries, the development of commerce, and the origin and growth of towns and ports. No hard-and-fast line should be drawn between much of the geography included in the two courses appearing in the syllabus, and it is to be hoped that in the amended Regulations for the Organization and Inspection of Schools this phase of the subject will not be overlooked.

*Drawing.*—Speaking generally, this subject is well taught, and in many cases highly commendable results have been obtained. Drawing is a natural means of education, and under proper guidance may be developed in such a way as to be a lifelong source of enjoyment and means of self-improvement.