

in former reports, is, in expert hands, a most valuable aid to school-work. To make the lesson useful the teacher must superintend the reading, and test in some way the pupil's knowledge. In too many cases, however, the pupils are left to themselves, without any questioning on the part of the teacher, until the time has arrived for the next lesson, the result being that the benefit which ought to accompany this method of training in habits of self-effort and self-instruction is, for the great majority of pupils, practically lost.

As we have noted in former reports, recitation is, as a rule, less satisfactory than reading. We rarely find a class where, self-consciousness having been overcome, the pupils enter into the spirit and meaning of the author's words. We feel that teachers are too often satisfied with the mere memorizing of the poetry and prose chosen, and make but little effort to teach the elements of elocution, which pupils are quite able to understand and apply, or to lead them to appreciate the beauty of thought and setting in what they have learnt. A diminishing number of schools are still satisfied with prose and verse without literary or other merit. With such a wealth of excellent material to choose from there can be no excuse for requiring pupils to learn anything not worthy of being treasured in the memory, and of becoming perhaps a lifelong and inspiring possession.

*Composition.*—We have little to add to our remarks made on this subject in previous reports. The work varied a good deal from school to school and from class to class, but on the whole showed improvement when compared with that submitted in former years. A most pleasing feature was the improved standard reached by candidates from country schools in the examination for S6 certificates. We would again draw attention to the want of progress in this subject in the upper standards of many schools—*i.e.*, the very slight difference in merit between exercises submitted by the various classes. In a number of cases the exercises obtained from S5 were but little in advance of those written by S4, and those submitted by S6 showed but a slight improvement on those coming from the next lower class. We would again urge the supreme importance of this subject, and the great need for its regular, systematic, and progressive treatment in each stage of school life.

*English, Word-building, and Spelling.*—It is difficult to dissociate these subjects and deal with each as a separate entity. The first is closely connected with composition—indeed, constitutes no unimportant part of the machinery by the use of which ability to write good composition may be acquired. Word-building is also a most useful and effective means of teaching spelling, and an important aid in dealing with composition. Failure to do justice to the possibilities of English and word-building is largely attributable to a want of appreciation of their importance in any composition and spelling scheme; and until this is realized no satisfactory method of treatment is possible. We trust that one among many of the reforms in the machinery and methods of our Empire which the war will render indispensable will be the adoption of the phonetic system of spelling so persuasively put forth by the Simplified Spelling Society.

*Arithmetic.*—This subject in general shows results in advance of previous effort. In many of the larger and in some of the smaller schools highly creditable work is being done, the subject being treated so as to become of direct practical use and of considerable educative value. There still remains, however, a large residue of schools in which the subject is not being taught with the thoroughness and success it deserves. The chief faults are slowness and inaccuracy, due, apparently, to defective number work in S1 and S2. In former years classes received a thorough drill in "tables," and ability to perform operations quickly and accurately was deemed essential. It may be that too much stress was laid on mere accuracy of calculation, and too little on the importance of method and of the intelligent application of principle. Now the pendulum appears to have swung too far in the other direction, for there has lately been a tendency to emphasize method at the expense of quickness and accuracy. Truth is generally found to lie between extremes, so that it is not surprising to find authorities gradually realizing that arithmetic should be taught concretely as number-study in the initial stage; but that if it is to be of any practical value the results obtained by discovery, or at any rate such of them as are usually arranged in tables, must be ready for instant use; and the time to make certain that this has been accomplished is when pupils are passing through Standards I and II. The whole arithmetic work of the upper school depends very largely on the foundation laid in these two classes. Within certain limits teachers should aim at securing absolute number-accuracy, as nothing short of that will produce the results we hope to obtain.

*Drawing.*—As a rule nature drawing is well done, and some very creditable work is produced. This is mainly due to the fact that the children are set to draw something real, and therefore interesting. It is to be regretted that there are still some teachers so unprogressive that they try to teach nature drawing and even object-drawing from flat copies. Object-drawing is much less frequently worthy of commendation. The main causes appear to be the choice of unsuitable objects, and lack of teaching. In nature drawing suitable examples are easily procurable, but to obtain suitable "fashioned objects" some foresight is necessary. Too often at the beginning of the lesson the teacher looks in vain round the school for something to draw; he then takes nature drawing instead, or he selects an object which is far too difficult, the result being waste of time and discouragement. The reproduction of difficult objects must be approached gradually. In the three lower standards the objects should be flat or nearly so; or, if round, they should be as nearly as possible symmetrical and placed on a level with the eye. In S4, before "solid" objects are attempted, definite lessons ought to be given in the foreshortening of the circle; and then, and not till then, there should be introduced objects embodying the circle. Similarly, in S5 and S6 definite teaching ought first to be given on the foreshortening of rectangular shapes placed in different positions, and then objects may be set embodying the principles learned.

Instrumental drawing and design and colour work do not appear to receive sufficient attention. Practice in these can to a large extent be co-ordinated, and much time saved. In colour work and design a progressive course is just as necessary as in any other subject. Interest should be aroused