

*Notes on Subjects: Reading.*—At no period were our pupils so well provided with books as at present, the free competition among firms producing works of excellent quality at reasonable prices, and the Government making liberal provision for those unable to bear the cost of private purchase, so that every facility is offered to our youth for becoming acquainted with good literature. As the importance of implanting a taste for such during adolescence cannot be overestimated, we regret to note that the successful efforts made by many School Committees in starting school libraries have not been continued. We are of opinion that the present prosperity should leave some permanent mark on educational institutions, and we hope that our teachers will remind the Committees of the liberal subsidies offered by the Board for establishing and extending school libraries. We regard the existence and use of an up-to-date school library as material evidence of the teacher's influence on his environment. The continuous reader is appropriately used to introduce the pupils to the works of standard authors, the work being directed to gathering up the thought-content and expressing it in the reader's own words. This affords a ready opportunity for oral composition—a subject that still requires greater attention on the part of our teachers, many of whom are satisfied with the matter, and pay little regard to the manner of the expression. At times we have found classes at silent reading, but the want of objective deprived the exercise of much of its value; and a similar remark applies to much of the so-called "preparation of reading." We have endeavoured to impress upon teachers the necessity for familiarizing their pupils with the objects of the different reading exercises, and so securing a definiteness of aim. At the risk of repetition, we cannot too forcibly impress upon teachers the necessity for watchfulness and good example in reference to oral expression; for all through life the art of speaking with persuasive distinctness is highly esteemed, and is productive not only of pleasure but of profit. The miscellaneous reader is well used as a medium by which the literary vocabulary is enlarged and logical analysis may be practised. Primarily it is used for reading aloud prepared selections, but some teachers have not considered that the art of reading can be acquired only through well-directed practice based upon a good model. As a consequence, the expressiveness of the reading is frequently impaired through careless articulation and want of inflection. We have insisted upon definiteness of aim in the reading-lesson, and would remind teachers again that one of the most important aims in this branch is to train pupils to use readily books of reference. It is surprising how seldom pupils know how to use a dictionary, or the purpose of the list of contents of even their class-books. On the whole we find that the dissemination of this literature is enlarging the views of the pupils, increasing their general knowledge, and improving both their written and oral expression.

*Writing.*—With the commendable purpose of securing rapidity some teachers have been experimenting and adopting methods that require increased muscular flexibility in arm or wrist. It is rather early to generalize, but, so far as our observations extend, the results are certainly satisfactory in the higher classes, though the correctness of form that was consciously aimed at, and that generally characterized the work done by the methods previously adopted, is not secured in the lower classes. Authorities are agreed that the condition requisite for effective and fluent writing is that the pen be held so lightly that muscular action is not restricted. If this be insisted on in the lower classes, the chief impediment to rapidity in the upper classes will be removed; and though precise conformity to a standard pattern may not result, correct and effective writing will be produced, and scope allowed for the individuality of the pupil. In the two highest classes we are of opinion that only those copybooks that give pattern business forms should be in use, so that pupils will apply their energies to some practical purpose. This will add interest to the lesson, and incidentally give the pupils much useful knowledge.

*Geography.*—In a number of country schools this subject showed signs of unskilful treatment. The real educative character of the instruction was neglected. In the junior division greater use should be made of field excursion and outdoor presentation, in order that the child may be able as far as possible to supply from observation the data to be used by constructive imagination in reproducing more remote environments. The mere acquisition of a fact by the child can scarcely be called knowledge. The more important step is so to work upon the fact that by experience and association it develops into actual knowledge. In the senior division the treatment of physical and mathematical geography must be objective if tangible results are to be obtained, for the knowledge a child gets by discovery is worth far more than that which is obtained by word of mouth. An attempt should be made to trace the interdependence of commercial or economic geography and physical geography.

*History.*—This subject is still regarded as a dry record of the past by some teachers, who seem to think that for its successful presentation only a text-book and a blackboard are needed. But school must educate for life. Motives must be inferred from actions, and character from deeds, and it is to this class of mental operations that the history lesson introduces our pupils. The purpose of the history lesson is not to amass information, but to use information in constructing a vivid picture of how and why men did this and that, achieved their successes and met with their failures. Habits of observation, inference, and judgment can thus be formed if the history lesson is properly conducted.

*Arithmetic.*—In general, arithmetic has been well taught. There are still some teachers who fail to recognize that the real secret of success in acquiring accuracy and speed is constant practice in oral work, which should form the basis for more advanced problems. The oral work should be of such a character as will give the pupils ability to apply number to everyday problems, and practical exercises in counting, measuring, weighing, and in giving change should be performed by the children themselves. The condition of mental arithmetic in the schools is not satisfactory, and this we attribute to two causes: first, insufficient *viva voce* work; and, secondly, the fact that mental calculations are not insisted on in all mechanical operations in arithmetic.

*Drawing.*—We are not at all satisfied with the condition of this subject in our schools. Like handwork, it is too often treated as an isolated subject, and the schemes, if any, are frequently