

were granted a pass in reading for Class D until he had been examined in vowel-production; (2) if a certain definite proportion of the marks in reading and recitation were given for correct production of vowel-sounds; and (3) if the Department were to issue a pamphlet for use in schools giving the regular course of vowel practice outlined in a series of lessons in the *Journal of Education* four or five years ago, these lessons being illustrated by photographs or diagrams showing the correct position of teeth, lips, and tongue in correctly sounding the vowels referred to. It is, of course, impossible for our teachers in the short school day to neutralize altogether the effect of the street and the home; but the attempt should be made, and in those classes where it has been made a wonderful improvement has been effected.

(2.) Recitation: In many of our schools a very high standard is reached in enunciation and expression, and if the correct value were given to vowel-sounds the recitation of most of our town pupils might be marked "excellent." The want of expression sometimes noticed in the recitation of pupils in our smaller schools is frequently due to the selection of passages that are not suitable for dramatic treatment. Year after year certain poems are chosen from the reading-book because they are easy to remember. The teacher should note, however, that a smooth rhyme is often the worst possible choice for recitation, a dramatic extract which, as poetry, may be inferior, but in which the metre is broken, being more suitable for recitation. From month to month the *School Journal* gives suitable extracts for recitation, and these might be supplemented by the addition of suitable prose extracts from the readers in use.

(3.) Comprehension of matter read: In the upper classes we have for some years tested the power of pupils to place in their proper context difficult words chosen from the reading-book, and we find that the using of such words in good compound and complex sentences has given excellent practice in both oral and written composition. The answering of oral questions as to the meaning of phrases, and generally as to the "thought-content" of the lessons read, is less satisfactory. Pupils should, of course, be trained to use a dictionary, but the "dictionary habit" fails in its most essential object if it does not result in enabling pupils to follow the meaning of the passage read, and to reproduce in their own words the scene represented by the passage. It is a matter of great importance that pupils should be encouraged to express orally the meaning of phrases and sentences, and the power of doing so will be greatly increased if the pupil is encouraged to associate the pregnant words and phrases with a mental picture—more or less distinct according to the varying powers of imagination in different pupils.

*Grammar and Composition.*—As we hold firmly the conviction that if composition at all worthy of the name is to be produced in our schools, such a knowledge of grammar as is necessary to a rational treatment of composition should be taught, we have always emphasized the importance of systematic training in grammar, and we are pleased to report that there is no lack of appreciation of the educative value of formal grammar teaching. This application of the knowledge of grammar has not only lent interest to the study of that subject, but has also had an excellent effect on the composition. We note with satisfaction that the Department's requirements in the grammar of the highest classes are, in scope and definiteness, a distinct improvement on those of former years. With the view of making the work as practicable as possible we have impressed on our teachers the necessity for instructing the pupils of the highest classes in the different forms of business correspondence.

*Arithmetic.*—We notice with regret that some teachers still look on "mental arithmetic" as a subject quite separate from written exercises in arithmetic. We strongly recommend that, in addition to regular practice in mental arithmetic, all book problems should be introduced by simple problems that can be worked mentally and answered orally by the weaker members of the class. The correct working of arithmetical problems is really an exercise in elementary logic, and, together with formal grammar, is the best means for training in logic that our syllabus affords. Failure to work problems is in a great many cases due merely to "self-distrust" on the part of the pupil. Now, provided always that elementary tables have been thoroughly memorized in the lower classes, a problem should offer no difficulty to the pupil of average ability if he has learned to approach it without fear, and this attitude of mind may be encouraged by the method outlined above. If such a problem is attacked in the way outlined the weaker pupil will gain in two ways: firstly, he will gain confidence in his own power of setting out the steps required in reasoning out the problem; and, secondly, he will have good practice in oral expression. In the arithmetic examinations we often find pupils giving absurd answers; to avoid this absurdity pupils should be regularly trained to obtain an approximately correct answer before beginning to work the problem. We notice with pleasure that the arithmetic tests, both in the text-books authorized by the Department and in the Department's test-cards, are being associated more and more closely with the life-interests of pupils, and with the work they will have to do when they leave school. We hope, however, that when the publishers revise S1 and S2 of the "Progressive Arithmetic" they will give a great deal more practice in somewhat more difficult mechanical work. In our opinion the greater part of the time devoted to arithmetic in S1 and S2 should be given to constant revision of tables and to attaining speed and accuracy in fairly difficult mechanical work. If these two indispensable results are not attained in S1 and S2 the arithmetic of the higher classes must necessarily be both slow and inaccurate. We are strongly convinced that no problem should be set in S1 and S2 that cannot be worked mentally and the result expressed orally. At this early stage the setting-out on slates of fairly difficult problems is largely a waste of time. The problems should, we think, be altogether mental problems, and should be merely concrete examples based on thoroughly memorized tables. We cannot too strongly insist that the only possible foundation of speedy and accurate arithmetic is the thorough memorizing of tables in the lower classes.

*History and Civics.*—While some headmasters have drawn up very good schemes for teaching history and civics, and have given good instruction on the lines laid down, yet on the whole in