

**ARITHMETIC.**—This subject is taught indifferently in at least one-half of the schools examined by me. The children evidently know very little about their tables, and in the junior classes are quite unable to add or subtract mentally with any degree of smartness, using their fingers or making strokes on their slates instead. The teaching is not practical, and the great majority of the scholars in these schools fail to work correctly easy questions requiring the least thought. Teachers would do well to confine their attention, especially in the upper classes, to what will be really useful to their pupils after they leave school, and so fit them for the business of every-day life.

**GRAMMAR.**—In setting papers on grammar, I carefully avoided, even in the case of the Sixth Standard, catch questions; yet the results are far from creditable. The work is done in a careless and mechanical style, and the parsing shows little or no intelligent perception of the relation of words in a sentence. Too much dependence is placed on text-books, and whole pages are committed to memory without any attempt being made to explain or illustrate the meaning. In a few schools the teaching is thorough, and the scholars have acquired a fair knowledge of the subject, but in the great majority the methods of instruction are evidently inferior. Fully 50 per cent. of those presented in the Sixth Standard had not the slightest knowledge of derivations and meanings of prefixes and affixes.

**COMPOSITION.**—Out of 243 examined in composition, 69 failed to get beyond the heading of their papers, 93 wrote less than eight lines, and the remainder, with but few exceptions, showed that their acquaintance with the construction of sentences and the principles of punctuation was very slight. This subject is now included in the requirements of the Fourth Standard, and, I think, wisely so. Very few of the scholars attending our public schools, especially in the country districts, remain long enough at school or attend with sufficient regularity to get beyond the Fourth Standard, and I am sure that every attempt to make this, the main test, as thorough as possible, will give satisfaction to those who take a real interest in educational matters. Seeing that I have had very few opportunities of visiting the schools, and especially of seeing the teachers at work, it would be useless to theorize on the causes of failure.

**READING.**—Judging by the high percentage, it might be deemed that this subject is taught in a very satisfactory manner, but such is not the case. There is a great difference between a mere pass and really good reading, and I will venture to say that not more than 30 per cent. of the number examined in the higher standards passed creditably. The lesson for the day is evidently very seldom prepared by either teacher or pupils, and is hurried through without any attempt being made to explain the words, phrases, and allusions. In very few instances were the children able to give any explanation of what they had just been reading, and, such being the case, it is not a matter of surprise that they read the portion allotted to them in a dreary and unnatural tone that was at times positively unpleasant. In some schools the reading was so indistinct that it was quite impossible to form any estimate of the value of the teaching. Greater attention should be paid to the junior classes, and they ought to receive some special instruction as to the management of the organs of speech, position of body when reading, holding of books, and acquirement of clear and distinct utterance. Repetition of verses has not received much attention, and its value in improving articulation and expression is generally overlooked.

**SINGING and DRAWING** are taught in comparatively few schools. Now that a large number of the teachers have attended full courses of lectures on the theory of education, and are, or ought to be, thoroughly proficient in drill, some attempt might be made to afford them instruction in these subjects.

**BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, ETC.**—The schools are generally well arranged, suitably furnished, and provided with ordinary school appliances. Most of the playgrounds have a neglected appearance, and a few trees, judiciously planted, would be a considerable protection from the winds, and would materially improve the sites. It is the exception to find due provision for the separation of the boys and girls in the playgrounds, and some teachers think that it is no part of their duty to pay any attention to them while there.

**ORGANIZATION.**—The registers, with but few exceptions, are carefully kept. In seven schools I found no time-table, and in several others those in use were undoubtedly time-tables, but wholly unsuited to the circumstances of the school. I pointed out the defects to the teachers, and in some instances I know that the alterations suggested have been made. The classification is fairly satisfactory, and in this particular, if in no other, the standard system has been of great use to untrained teachers.

**DISCIPLINE AND DRILL.**—In the town schools, and in some of the best district schools, the discipline is, so far as an Inspector can judge, in every way satisfactory. The scholars enter and leave school in an orderly manner, and behave properly while there. When they form in class, or take their places for examination, their movements are made simultaneously, and without undue noise or confusion. In such schools it is a pleasure to examine. In others just the reverse is the case. Though the teachers may be good disciplinarians, yet they utterly fail to secure order. The children are fidgety, and the examiner finds great difficulty in preventing talking, copying, and such like faults. A large number of the teachers have a practical acquaintance with drill, but seem to think that it should be kept exclusively for the playground.

**QUARTERLY EXAMINATIONS.**—That some teachers are to a great extent unacquainted with the attainments of their pupils is evident from their distressed looks when they see the papers written at the examination of their schools. I have not the slightest doubt that if searching examinations were held at the end of each quarter the number of failures would be much smaller. The children would thus become familiarized with the work, and would be less likely to give way to nervousness on the day of inspection. The teacher would be able to gain a thorough knowledge of the progress of his school, and at the same time detect the weak points in his methods of instruction. Masters of adjoining districts might exchange questions, and, provided that the marks were properly kept, the results of such tests might be made the basis of the prize-giving at the end of the year.

**EXERCISE-BOOKS.**—I make it a rule to see some of the exercise-books in each school that I visit, and I must say that a large number of them show great carelessness in the doing, and very little attempt at correction after they are done. It is quite useless, and a great waste of time and paper, to