

into a habit, as it were, of saying the thing that is not, and of enacting a sham. Of course this injures him morally and intellectually. He is having bad training when he might have good. He is getting trained to a habit of doing falsely and inaccurately what he should be trained to do truly and accurately. It should never be lost sight of that the object of all teaching should be to train the pupil in habits that will carry him through the travail of after life. Teachers should try to get good work; they should insist on getting honest work. In this case honest work means a valuable training in habits of accuracy and precision. I make it a practice to examine the standard composition and grammar papers of every school in the district, and I find almost invariably that the neat and careful writer does well in other subjects, while the scrawler mostly fails in all. Careful and honest work in one subject begets careful and honest work in the others.

Transcribing from books, which to my mind is a valuable means of training, is better taught as a rule. I still, however, find classes where a quantity of matter is allowed to be scrawled anyhow on a slate, with some after corrections. This comes from the error so deeply imbed in many teachers' minds that the time set apart for any subject is to be wholly taken up by the pupils' work, whereas teaching should occupy in many cases the greater part of the time. It is the absence of teaching that is the bane of so many schools. Pupils are allowed to produce any amount of bad work. No doubt there is for the most part some after correction, which is ineffective. But true teaching would prevent most of the bad work, and would quickly bring out good. Ten minutes of pupils' work and twenty minutes of corrective teaching, which should take the shape of making the pupil correct his own errors, will soon produce satisfactory results. This applies to many subjects. As regards this particular subject, when the teacher has to deal with an inexperienced class, or one that has fallen into bad ways, he should first of all warn the class that he will expect a certain kind of work, say large open writing, and but few words in each line. Then he should allow them to write one line, which he should glance over, or examine more carefully as time permits. He should next question the entire class about the sort of mistakes he has noted as most prevalent, illustrating his remarks, if necessary, by means of the black-board. He then should have the line written over and over again, if it appears necessary. It will, I think, be plain that this kind of teaching must be effectual. That is the test of all work. The teacher should constantly ask himself, "Am I effecting anything, or am I working the machinery at my command to grind nothing?" I wish again to state the strong objection I have to the practice of getting pupils to correct each other's work. It is bad intellectual training, and bad moral training.

The teaching of reading has improved. The temporary appointment of a teacher of reading for the city and suburban schools has had a good general effect by awakening teachers to the importance attached to reading. I am afraid that many teachers fail to lay the right foundation of good reading, that is, a thorough understanding of what is read. When a class have gone through a portion of a reading book labouriously, and have by frequent repetition mastered its meaning, then they are in a position to read with intelligence and fluency, and they have besides got a valuable training in thoroughness. As regards the beginning of reading, too much of alphabet teaching lingers in places. I am of opinion that this senseless method should be made to cease, and that what is called the "Look and Say Method" should alone be allowed. The reading of some of the junior teachers is not what it should be. Head-teachers can and ought to do much to rectify this by insisting on improvement, which in most instances can be brought about by practice.

The subjects least satisfactorily taught are geography and history. The bad results in the former must, I fear, be laid altogether at the teachers' doors. It is a subject which children delight in when they are intelligently taught to exercise their observing faculties on it, and ample instructions how to teach it have been placed within the teachers' reach. Pupils should be taught to make their walks voyages of discovery, to bring back to the teacher accounts of the islands, the almost islands, the lakes, the seas, &c., they have discovered—they will find plenty in winter on every country road. Then comparison comes in with these things as painted on the map. But indeed, of good ways, there is no end if people could only see. As regards history there is more difficulty in the way. The more general establishment of school libraries by diffusing a taste for reading, which the teacher should bend to his purpose, would perhaps do more than anything else to prepare the soil for the growth of historical knowledge.

There is some improvement in the teaching of grammar, but I cannot say I am satisfied with the way it is taught as a rule. However, teachers are beginning to find out that the elementary knowledge of grammar required for the Third Standard, or the Fourth, can, by means of object-lessons, be conveyed to the pupils in the Second and even First Standards. Children can easily be trained to see what the things called nouns are; to see what sort of things they are (adjectives); to see what they do (verbs); and to see how they do it (adverbs). I think that some knowledge of syntax—acquired by oral teaching—might very well be exacted in the Fourth Standard.

By steadily insisting on original composition—no matter how crude—considerable progress has been made in this subject. In the First Standard small beginnings are made. A little more is done in the Second. A large number of pupils preparing for the Third Standard write creditable letters, and improve still further in the Fourth. There is only one way to teach composition: follow nature, ask a child for his own natural talk only. Do not manacle him with reproduction and the like imbecilities.

Object-lessons are not as a rule what they should be. It seems almost impossible to make teachers feel that the aim of these lessons is to make children observe the things before their eyes; it is not to convey what is called useful knowledge. The so-called object-lesson books have much to answer for. Teachers will point with absurd complacency to lists of subjects in which they have given what they call object-lessons to a class not half of whom perhaps can tell how a horse's hoof differs from a cow's. The only subjects taken should be the animals and minerals, the trees, grasses, flowers, &c., of the neighbourhood.

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