

the Sixth Standard in dealing with sums in the lower rules. This also shows how little the necessity for constant revision is realised. Though I am compelled to call attention to some imperfections, I can with pleasure testify to the fact that the general work shows strong tendencies toward improvement. Mental arithmetic was decidedly better done, and the practice of finger counting is much less common. Mental work, combined with a judicious use of the blackboard, is the true remedy for the existing defects; and teachers would find benefit from a less exclusive attention to such problems as are likely to be given on examination day, and the substitution of systematic exercises in general principles, by means of easy examples. I strongly recommend to the notice of teachers Gardiner's "How to teach the Method of Unity," and "How to teach Arithmetic," by J. T. Livesey, as books which can furnish invaluable suggestions upon the subject.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—The spelling of the lower classes was uniformly good, reaching in some schools to a very high degree of excellence. The classes above the third were less perfect. The Fourth Class was on the whole fairly good; but weakness in Standards V. and VI. was too often perceptible. Scholars in the Sixth Standard should certainly be capable of writing a short letter without making any serious mistakes in spelling; but I am afraid that many scholars pass through this standard who could not write a letter upon ordinary topics without danger of disfigurement in this respect. It is not altogether from words which may be considered difficult that the danger proceeds. The mistakes found in the work of the Fifth and Sixth Classes consisted too often of placing "there" for "their," "where" for "were," "to" for "too," &c. Such mistakes as these are the outcome of the substitution of mechanical work for mental development, and of the absence of proper stimulation of the faculty of attention. Carelessness also has its part in the matter. The number of corrected words met with in the dictation papers is a proof of this. The only effectual remedy is for the teacher to regard and treat every alteration as a mistake. Words having the same sound but spelt differently should be more frequently used as exercises, and always used in sentences contrasting the two words. Upper class pupils should always have a fairly good dictionary as part of their book equipment, and should be strongly enjoined never to write a word when they are uncertain as to the spelling.

GRAMMAR.—The work in this subject shows strong contrasts. Standard III. in some schools acquitted itself remarkably well; in others it was decidedly weak. Standard IV. on the whole did very good work. The parsing was generally full and accurate, and in some schools compared favourably with the work of the upper classes. Standard V. exhibited generally a very good knowledge of the subject, and Standard VI., with a few notable exceptions, did its work fairly well. Weakness in derivation, and knowledge of prefixes and affixes, shows the necessity of greater practice in word analysis. Some time ago I sent out to the schools a sample table showing how words may be broken up; but results would show that my suggestion met with little appreciation. Adoption of the plan would, I am sure, be productive of good effect upon both spelling and grammar. Composition, while showing considerable improvement, still exhibits many points of weakness. Incorrect spelling, absence of capital letters, and clumsiness of expression are too often met with. Paraphrasing was given to Standard V. with most unsatisfactory results, the majority of the scholars not attempting to alter the exact wording or arrangement of the piece of poetry given. This is an invaluable exercise for teaching children to write clearly and correctly, and should be more diligently and carefully practised. I would strongly advise an introduction to the adverb in Standard III., and simple analysis in Standard III. or IV. I would also impress upon teachers the value of constructive exercises. A sensation of power is created when a child sees on the blackboard before him a sentence or word of his own building, which is of great value and effect. Though derivation is allotted only to Standard VI., the teacher who thoroughly understood his work would begin in Standard V. to give lists of the principal prefixes and affixes, with their meanings, to be learnt, and also the most commonly-used Latin roots. For this anticipation of the requirements of the programme he would find himself well paid in the effect upon the spelling and composition of the Sixth Standard.

GEOGRAPHY.—Standards II., III., and IV. did well in this subject. The weaknesses in Standards V. and VI. were principally shown in the difficulty experienced in connecting events or information of any kind with places, and when given it was generally in a very meagre form. Physical geography showed great lack of knowledge. Even where there was some approximation to the knowledge there was great want of lucidity in giving expression to it. Geography is one of those subjects which may be most easily prevented from becoming mere memory work, and yet memorising is still the most noticeable feature of the work. It is a subject which can to the child be made intensely interesting, especially where the natural features of the country are a part of the everyday scene; and it may be used as a training subject in habits of observation. The Board has sanctioned the introduction of the Geographical Readers, the series to be used being Longmans's. I anticipate benefit from their introduction, provided they are used in a proper manner. They should be treated not as containing particulars to be committed to memory, but as aids to oral lessons given before the map, and if a blank map be sometimes used so much the better. The spelling of geographical names is much better than formerly, but there is still need for reform in this respect. Mapping is generally well done; but in one or two schools there was great trouble taken to make a display by outlining with coloured pencil, and the location of places was extremely defective.

GENERAL.—In class subjects most satisfactory results are shown, while in additional subjects the standard of last year is barely maintained. History is a very weak subject in all classes, the work best done being the list of sovereigns, with dates of accession, it being also the least important. Marcus Ward's History Readers have been introduced this year, and from their use I anticipate improvement in the mode of treating the subject. The existence of a carefully-chosen school library would have considerable effect in promoting a taste for history. A child who has read "Harold," "The Last of the Barons," "The Fair Maid of Perth," "Waverley," "Ivanhoe," "The Talisman," "Westward Ho," &c., will have derived more benefit than from any mere cramming of dates and disjointed facts, inasmuch as he will see that history has its attractive aspects, and be