

instance, it is not unusual to find pupils even in Standard VI ignorant of such simple facts as the position on the map of the world of such countries as Austria, Japan, and China, or of such important commercial centres as Birmingham and Manchester. This state of things has gradually arisen since the introduction of the new syllabus, and is no doubt largely due to the indefinite and limited requirements demanded in this subject. Under the old syllabus this branch of geography was a comparatively strong one. The present syllabus calls for immediate revision in the direction of defining at least the minimum of work in political and commercial geography required for each standard. As a fair proportion of Standard VI pupils that passed on into the secondary schools take geography for Junior Civil Service and other examinations, this want of a reasonable grounding in this subject in the primary schools is proving a serious handicap to them when they are preparing for these examinations.

**HISTORY.**—Again we have to report, as we did last year, that the teaching of history has proved most disappointing in those schools where it is still treated solely as a reading-lesson. In some cases this unsatisfactory result may be attributed to the teacher, who has neither taught the lesson in an intelligent manner nor insisted on the pupils making some of the more important facts their own; but, on the other hand, in not a few cases where the treatment of the lessons has left little to be improved upon, the same disappointing results arise, partly, no doubt, on account of the unsuitable nature of some of the text-books used, but mainly on account of the fact that the reading-book cramps the intelligent teacher, and deters him from throwing his own personality into the lesson.

**ARITHMETIC.**—While there has been no very marked advance made in this subject, there has certainly been no backward movement. The results of our tests lead us to hope for greater accuracy and rapidity in the mechanical processes during the coming year. It is encouraging to note that the treatment of the subject in the lower standards has been more on the lines we recommended in our last annual report. Teachers are showing more judgment in the use of mechanical devices by not unduly prolonging their use, and thereby retarding the child's progress in the manipulation of simple abstract numbers. The child's memory is now being called upon to do its fair share of the work. Results arrived at by concrete methods are now being stored up for ready and quick use when required. It is not an uncommon experience to find that when a pupil is required to work a sum in which there is a considerable amount of mechanical drudgery, though it may be simple enough in other respects, he loses heart, and fails to complete the work. Every effort should be made by the teacher to train the pupils to acquire perseverance in dealing with such sums that require more than ordinary application.

**COMPOSITION.**—The treatment of composition, especially of essay-writing, has been somewhat more systematic and progressive. The elementary principles underlying the construction of an essay have been more intelligently and regularly taught. Teachers are beginning to recognize the value of the paragraph as the unit of an essay, with the result that the subject-matter of the essays is more logical and fuller in details. Another phase of essay-writing that has received more attention is that of variation. In some of our schools where the teaching is up to date, the essays given in gave undoubted evidence that this principle had been well and fully treated. In our last annual report we recommended that special lessons might be given to show the necessity of selecting suitable introductory adverbs and phrases of reference; but, though this has been done in several schools, the practice is not nearly so common as it might be. Until the pupils have received a regular training in the use of connecting words, especially between paragraph and paragraph, their essays, as is too often the case now, will be marred by want of sequence and logical dependence. We still find that the pupil's knowledge of the commonest rules of syntax is frequently very vague and uncertain—so vague and uncertain indeed that it proves a most unreliable guide when applied to test the grammatical correctness of the essays they have written. And it seems to us that this vagueness and uncertainty must continue to exist as long as grammar bearing on composition occupies such a relatively subordinate position in the school-curriculum as it does now. While the limitations—more imaginary than real—placed by the syllabus upon the teaching of formal grammar have led some of our teachers to almost entirely discontinue giving special lessons on it, we are pleased to note that our best teachers, taking a broader view of the spirit and requirements of the syllabus, and recognizing that the principles of grammatical laws underlying composition must be taught, and taught systematically, are giving regular and consecutive instruction in this subject. Lessons on even such simple elements in composition as "The Use of Capitals," "Punctuation," and "Easy Substitutions," to be treated successfully, must be based on the knowledge of grammar, otherwise they are doomed to failure. Then, again, no far-seeing teacher can overlook the value of grammar to those pupils who intend to proceed to a secondary school, and it is a common complaint of secondary-school teachers that pupils come to them from the primary schools unprepared in respect to critical language-study. We have made it a rule to require teachers to keep in some form or other the essays written by their pupils during the course of the year, and it is our practice to look carefully over them during our inspection-visits to ascertain among other things how the subject has been treated, whether this work has been taken as regularly as it should be, and whether they have been corrected carefully and regularly. Not infrequently we have found that serious errors have been overlooked, and the corrections that had been made have often been so indefinite as to be of comparatively little value to the pupils. In many cases more systematic methods of correction should be adopted. All corrections should be rewritten by the pupil in red ink at the foot of each exercise. More attention should be given to the punctuation and formal arrangement of an ordinary letter. The addressing of the envelopes was also weak.

**DISCIPLINE.**—As far as the negative quality of mere absence of disobedience and disorder is concerned, the discipline in our schools leaves little to be desired; but, as far as the positive qualities of responsiveness, alacrity, brightness, life, and fire is concerned, the discipline still leaves room for improvement. Another matter in connection with discipline that requires some attention is the question of insistence on promptness in carrying out of orders. It is common for us to hear a second order given before a previous one has been carried out by every member of the class. In those schools in which the pupils were conspicuous for their want of responsiveness and alacrity the teachers them-