

youth should be kept back who is proficient in all the most important subjects, yet fails in geography and history, still these two subjects should be pass-subjects—that is to say, subjects deficiency or proficiency in which will to some extent guide the Inspector as to whether a scholar should or should not pass the standard examination. To illustrate: John Smith passes in reading, spelling and dictation, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and fails in geography and history; making a total of five passes, and passing the standard. If Smith (in one of the Standards, III. to VI., in which both these subjects are taught) has passed in the more important subjects, he should pass for the standard despite the failure in two less important subjects, geography and history; but should a youth, say Brown, fail in two more important subjects, as writing and arithmetic, he should not pass the standard. Should, however, Jones fail in arithmetic (or dictation), geography, and history, he ought not to pass for the standard. In this case the deficiency in geography and history would determine, in part, the Inspector's judgment, and, joined with deficiency in another subject, would cause the boy to fail in the final result. Briefly, geography and history, which do not need, like drawing and singing, endowments which are possessed by a limited number, but which may be taught with benefit to any child of average capacity, should be made pass-subjects, if taught at all; they should have some influence in aiding the examiner in judging how far the child has progressed in his educational career, what is the child's intellectual grasp, and what his fitness to pass the standard, but should not rank with subjects—*e.g.*, reading and arithmetic—whose greater importance is acknowledged. By a slight change in Rule 8 (page 15) of the Regulations under "The Education Act, 1877," which should recognize a difference in the importance of those subjects which are now pass-subjects, a scholar's proficiency or deficiency in geography and history might be allowed (as in the third case quoted) to guide the examiner in the application of the standard to the case of an individual scholar—that is, they might be pass-subjects of less importance, and failure in two such subjects might be permitted without involving failure for the standard, as in Smith's case. By this plan, besides the advantages which, as I hope to show, will be derived from leaving them, as pass-subjects, there will be derived the advantage which it is contended will attach to their being made class-subjects—that failure in these subjects alone shall not prevent a youth's passing to a higher standard.

(b.) It is said by some that these subjects can be better taught when it is known that they are to be examined as class-subjects; that a teacher can enter into them with more spirit, &c. This argument merely refers to method. I fail to see that history and geography need be taught less spiritedly because each scholar is expected to have a knowledge of these subjects—because the teacher is pinned to a carefully-considered syllabus of instruction, and thereby prevented to a certain extent from indulging his own vagaries, and from submitting his class to a too frequent oratorical fire. If they remain pass-subjects, the teacher will aim at giving each scholar, as far as possible, a clear understanding of the matter on which each will be examined.

(c.) If geography and history were made class-subjects, the instruction given would "tend to the minimum required for a pass." The fact cannot be ignored that many teachers look to the percentage of standard passes which they can gain—make it an aim to secure a high percentage, and, perhaps almost unconsciously, neglect or give unduly short time to class-subjects. Thus, when examination time is near, is there not a temptation to put off the drawing or science lesson for the sake of a pass-subject? Members of educational bodies, too, in many cases, look well to the "percentage of passes." Is there not a strong premium offered to pay undue attention to pass subjects? Do we not hear of teachers stating, when advertising for positions, "85, 76, 90 per cent. passed at the last examinations?" It may be said that no teacher would care to get a high percentage of passes in standards, and have a bad report on the kind and amount of instruction given in geography, history, science, &c. But the reports on these subjects would depend much on the views of the Inspectors. Those who liked historical studies would be apt to make severe comments in the case of history being inefficiently taught; but might, if they did not attach much importance to scientific studies, bear with equanimity the fact that only a few definitions of scientific terms had been learnt by rote as the work in science for the year. As is the Inspector, so is the teacher. Would there not be a temptation in such an Inspector's district to give certain class-subjects a very moderate share of attention? Boards, too, may tolerate, and Committees accept, a teacher who can get a high percentage of passes, but whose class-subjects are poor. To secure for geography and history due attention they should, with the exception suggested later on, be retained as pass-subjects, though ranked as of less importance.

(d.) When each scholar feels that it is his particular duty to qualify himself in these subjects, and that good answering on the part of the rest of the class will not satisfy the object of the examination in these subjects so far as he is concerned, he will be induced to pay attention to them during the year with a view to getting into the next standard. Granted that the object of teaching the child is not that he may pass the standards, still we cannot ignore the fact—we may make use of it—that to pass the standard does in itself become an object to many children, as, besides the love of the knowledge itself and the preparedness to receive the teacher's instruction, there exists at the same time the spirit of emulation in getting a pass. Through the motive referred to, a pass-subject will be studied with more care than a class-subject, and therefore geography and history ought to be subjects of individual examination.

(e.) The way in which science and drawing are taught as class-subjects will scarcely afford a certain criterion as to how geography and history would fare if placed on a similar footing. Want of natural endowment is a drawback to the teaching of drawing in so many cases; want of practical instruction in science on the part of the teacher often prevents the successful treatment of scientific subjects in the schools. Neither consideration would hold good in the case of geography and history. I think the way in which a class-subject is taught depends in a great measure upon the tastes of the teacher and the importance attached by the Inspector to this or that particular branch, and that in many schools the mere fact, of a subject being made a class-subject would cause it, for the reasons stated, to get insufficient attention. During the year or so that I have been engaged in the