

and subsequently the class may be required to reproduce the whole exercise in writing. In this way the child will become familiar with abstract ideas—will learn to recognise the nice distinctions between them, and will obtain, in fact, mental eyesight: his intelligence will be increased, and he will find pleasure in the exercise of the new faculty he has obtained. But this will only be the case if the teacher handles his subject skilfully, discusses it with the scholar, and, by questioning him, obliges him to give a reason for every statement that he makes. If, however, a parsing lesson be conducted in this way, not only will a knowledge of English grammar be imparted to the child, but education in the best sense of the term. Only, to do this the teacher must have a thorough knowledge of grammar himself, so as to be able to solve the little problems as they arise, and not be obliged to shirk them. The man who has not thought the whole subject out for himself cannot teach English grammar.

The table shows that the study of geography, as well as that of grammar, has declined amongst us. In respect to the geography, however, my knowledge of the results obtained on examination days enables me to say that the lower percentage arises, not from any general neglect of the subject throughout the schools of the district, but from the fact that in a few schools it has been almost entirely neglected—perhaps in view of the fact that it was soon to become a class subject, as if the teachers of these schools were anxious to adumbrate the fate that awaited it when that much-desired consummation should be reached.

*Object Lessons.*—Of the subjects not pass subjects the one most generally neglected is that of object lessons. It appears to me that in many schools this subject is really hardly taught at all, though the form of doing so occasionally may still be kept up. A pretty good guess at the amount of attention bestowed on it in these cases may be made from what takes place on examination day, when the Inspector asks for the list of object lessons given throughout the year. The teacher has no list prepared; but, seizing a pencil—seldom a pen in such cases—he hastily jots down the names of half a dozen subjects or less, and hands the paper to the Inspector with the air of a man who has at length acquitted himself of all his obligations. By a singular coincidence the subjects thus written down are generally found to be the names of domestic animals treated of in the reading book of the class, a coincidence which, it is supposed, the Inspector will not notice. The whole thing is perfunctory in the extreme; and one feels much more respect for the teacher who honestly owns that he has done nothing in the subject. There can be no doubt that object lessons are an essential part of primary education, and an important part, both on account of the useful knowledge which may be imparted through them—though some, I see, are disposed to disparage this view of the matter—and also for the opportunity thus given to the teacher of calling out the observing faculties of the younger children—doubtless a most important part of education. The conscientious teacher will therefore allot a definite time to the subject in the time-table, and scrupulously observe it. One or two such lessons, at least, might be given every week throughout the school year in every school; whilst in large schools, with a teacher to each class, more than this might be done. In addition, the teacher must give some thought to the selection of his subject, and still more to the preparation of the lesson beforehand, which, under these circumstances, is likely to become exceedingly interesting to the scholars, and a part of the school work they will look forward to with pleasure. In future object lessons are to be treated as class subjects, and marks awarded for them as such; and I may say that I do not propose to award any marks for object lessons of the kind referred to at the commencement of this paragraph.

*General Methods.*—The case of one or two schools during the year in which the failure at examination has been very signal makes necessary some general remarks on school method. Some teachers seem not to have realised the fact that more is required of them, if they are to be successful in their work, than merely giving an oral lesson, or setting their classes a task. The teacher must see for himself that the work he prescribes is actually done by the pupils, and done correctly; and the failure to do this is, I believe, the cause that general disaster overtakes some schools on examination day, revealing the fact that the teacher, who has perhaps been congratulating himself on having carried his classes over all the ground prescribed, and a good deal more, has in reality only been beating the air. Entering such a school on an unannounced visit, one sees something of this sort: A class sitting in desks has been engaged, say, in writing out a grammar exercise on slates. The time arrives for dismissing school, and the pupils are directed to change slates (perhaps) with a view to a revision of the work done. The teacher then gives out the correct version of the exercise, and bids errors be marked. The slates are returned to their owners, each scholar is called upon to say how many mistakes he has made, and, no one, wonderful to say, having made more than the excusable number, the class is dismissed. No personal inspection of the slates, or of any of them, has been made by the teacher at all, and it needs very little knowledge of school life or of human nature to be aware that, in the case of many of these scholars, no genuine work has been done. Absence of supervision on the part of the teacher naturally and inevitably begets carelessness on that of the scholars; and the more backward ones make no effort to learn what they will never be discovered not to know. The teacher spends his days in pleasant delusion as to the state of his school until the results of examination day disclose the real condition of affairs. Strict personal supervision of written work by the teacher can never be dispensed with if he is to teach successfully. That such supervision involves much extra trouble cannot be denied; but such a consideration will have no weight except with teachers who have mistaken their profession. Exercise books must be carefully examined—out of school hours if need be—in order that the scholar may understand that no perfunctory performance of duty will be tolerated. Nor will the benefit be altogether one-sided; for the teacher, whilst inspecting the pupils' exercises, and noticing the character of the mistakes made, will get many a useful hint as to the direction his future instructions should take. He will learn, for one thing, how much need there is for repeating the same lesson again and again—a truth only to be learnt, perhaps, in this way, and one of the last importance to the teacher. To sum up what I have said