

out of 10s.?" generally puzzled the majority. Pupils appeared to me to be ignorant of how to set about working such sums, or to be unable to concentrate their attention upon working them. There is no doubt arithmetic would be far better than it is if there were more mental work and more blackboard work. As soon as fairly mechanical accuracy is obtained, no sums should be given that do not require more or less thought to enable the pupil to set about working them. The lesson should frequently be introduced by mental work; but this, again, is of no use unless the pupils understand the processes. An example will explain my meaning. After Standard III. pupils have fairly mastered the mechanical work in subtraction of money, the teacher desires to give them a problem like the following: "A house and its furniture cost £1,000: the furniture cost £378 15s. 6d.; what did the house cost?" Now, should the teacher dictate the sum at once to the class he will probably find more pupils will add the amounts than will subtract. He should, however, first give an easy mental sum, such as, "A horse and cart cost £50: the horse cost £20; what did the cart cost?" Probably every pupil in the class would know the answer, £30; but this is of no use, for still few would be able either to clearly explain how they got the answer, or to work the first problem. What the teacher, therefore, requires to do is, to educe from the class, and write upon the blackboard, the following:—

Cost of horse and cart	...	=	£50.
Cost of horse	...	=	£20.
∴ Cost of cart	...	=	£50 - £20 = £30.

This is what I call working a sum in an intelligent fashion. The teacher should seldom be satisfied with the mere answer. After a few more simple examples like the above have been given the first problem is dictated, and it will be found that, if the majority do not get the answer, they have at least set about working the sum correctly, which latter, after all, is the intellectual part of the work. On the examination schedules of most schools I wrote numerous examples of methods in teaching arithmetic.

GRAMMAR.—The results in grammar show a serious decline in the higher three standards, and this subject, perhaps, as well as arithmetic, points to the advisability of another standard. Thus I find every year that fully three-fourths of Standard IV. pupils completely fail to grasp the inflexions of noun and pronoun, while in Standard V. the same difficulty is experienced with the inflexions of the verb. Of course, that pupils cannot tell whether the word "children" is singular or plural, the word "me" nominative or objective, that they parse a participle in "—ing" as present indicative on one line and past indicative on the next—all this shows defective training and great want of thought. But, still, there is the fact; and if other districts have similar experiences to the above, it would be better to extend the requirements over more classes than to perpetuate shams. Standard IV. pupils generally failed in the parts of speech that required thought to distinguish them, through not noting the functions of the words—telling, naming, describing, limiting, &c. In Standard VI. analysis of complex sentences was generally beyond the power of the pupils. Not only would grammar, but also composition, be benefited, if simple analysis were begun earlier than at present.

COMPOSITION.—In letter-writing I found considerable improvement in beginning and ending letters. The subjects for composition, too, were often well handled. Still, however, sentences commenced with small letters or with the everlasting pronouns, "it" and "they," were far too common an experience, and in the higher classes ideas about punctuation were very vague. For composition I should like to see only such subjects given as would draw out the pupil's powers of observation and description. When treating such a subject as "The Elephant" the pupil merely reproduces information given, in something like the following manner: "The elephant is a quadruped. It is found in India and Africa. It has a trunk and two tusks," &c. Now, work of this class ought to teach the pupil the formation of sentences and the use of capitals (that, through bad management, it does not is an every-day experience), and also by means of it a pupil may be led to connect his statements by means of conjunctions, relative pronouns, &c.; but such work is not true composition. How much better would it be to ask a boy to give his own ideas on the appearance of a mountain, the bush, a rata tree, &c.; to describe how he spent a holiday, how he enjoyed a ride, how he played a game, his father's farm—in fact, anything that would bring out his own ideas, not those he had received from his teacher! Transcription might be made a valuable means for improving composition, grammar, reading, and spelling. The pupil should carefully notice everything in connection with the passage transcribed, and no mistake of any kind is excusable. But transcription is almost useless unless a few minutes towards the end of the lesson are devoted to oral work, the teacher educing from, and impressing upon, the class matters of importance, such as paragraphs and sentences, capitals and punctuation marks, use of "s," peculiar spellings, &c. If this system were pursued pupils that have been transcribing for four years would not be incapable, for instance, of distinguishing the possessive from the nominative case. I think it is Mr. Payne who points out that a child who has thoroughly mastered five or six pages of a reading book mainly by his own powers of observation, analysis, and synthesis, which powers were so directed by the teacher that the child was hardly aware how much he had himself discovered, how much he had been told (the art of true education), is, *pro tanto*, an educated person.

GEOGRAPHY.—In Standard II., except at a few schools, geography in no way suffered from being made a class subject. The term "map" was seldom clearly understood, but otherwise the work was generally good. In Standard III. the slate work was neater and better than formerly, but often the oral examination betrayed great ignorance of local geography. I call to mind a very large class examined in a room from the windows of which the Tararua Mountains could plainly be seen, as they were only a few miles distant, yet not one pupil could name them. A very common error in this standard was the confusion of the names of the provincial districts, as Otago and Canterbury, with the names of towns. In Standard IV. a peculiar experience of the work was that pupils almost invariably showed a more intimate knowledge of the features of the South Island than of those of their own district. In treating capitals in this standard particular attention should be paid