

impressions of relative values, weights, and magnitudes. Furthermore, the intellectual value of the study of arithmetic should not be lost sight of through attaching too much importance to the subject from a purely utilitarian or practical point of view: the solution of a problem, therefore, should be arrived at by logical steps. And we would make a strong point of this: that as soon as the purely mechanical steps in a rule are known the sums should always be stated in words without any reference to the rules required to work them. "So long as a pupil finds any difficulty whatever in recognising an exercise in a given rule under any guise, however unfamiliar, be sure he does not understand that rule, and ought not to quit it for a higher." It would be found useful to encourage pupils to invent for themselves new questions on each rule before proceeding to the next.

Geography showed a slight improvement this year. It has not, however, yet reached anything like a satisfactory state, and more failures still continue to occur in this subject than in any other, except arithmetic. The following are points where weaknesses were more especially shown: Places were very often most inaccurately located on the maps. This points to bad training, bringing to light, as it does, carelessness on the part both of pupil and teacher. In Standard IV. "ocean routes" were poorly known, even such ignorance of the map of the world with regard to the relative positions of oceans and continents as would be discreditable to Standard II. being often disclosed. Conspicuous geographical features—Pamirs, Gobi, African lakes, Cape Horn, and such-like—were not known. The reason for places being of interest to tourists was almost invariably given as "scenery," no attempt being made to give the particular features of the scenery. Little attention appears to be given to the geographical advantages of ports and capitals. In Standard V. we have again to notice, as last year, a want of intelligent grasp shown in giving mountain-systems and river-systems, very often merely a list of names being written without any arrangement or connection. The pupils in this standard also still show very hazy ideas of the requirements in the mathematical geography of the globe, their answers giving evidence of rote work, and often having no bearing on the particular question. In Standard VI. political and commercial geography were very fair, but mathematical and physical geography showed the same faults as Standard V. It is high time that every school had a globe.

We think it a huge error of judgment grouping, as some teachers do, Standard IV. pupils with Standard VI. pupils in the work of the latter standard. No doubt the syllabus allows of it, but how pupils just out of Standard III. can be expected to understand the syllabus for Standard VI. surpasses our comprehension.

Composition was seldom good, and was often very poor. As subjects for letters and essays, we invariably gave some of those treated by the teachers during the year, and frequently the compositions sent in were almost word for word the same. This points to pure cramming, and no doubt is due to too mechanical treatment in teaching the construction of sentences, and to slavish adherence to text-books. But in composition intelligent thought should be the object aimed at; and, while an exercise devoid of grammatical errors may be valueless, one with many word mistakes, but which shows thought and attention to teaching, may be very promising. As Mr. Thring points out, original composition means the rousing observation, the giving the seeing eye, and training the mind to make a harmonious picture of what it sees, so that others may know it. Original composition demands that such striking points shall be seized as mark out the thing written about in a peculiar and special way. The use of books in composition is noxious. Each teacher ought to cook the exercise according to the disposition of his class, and not serve out regulation rations of salt beef to invalids. With regard to the subjects chosen for treatment by the teachers, different teachers took very different views. Thus, while in the highest standards at some schools the most advanced subject was such a one as a description of the surrounding district, at others the pupils sent in very fair essays on matters of Imperial importance. We should say here that, whatever subject is chosen, first of all care should be taken that the pupils know all about it; and, secondly, the subject should be made as attractive as possible. Abstract questions and subjects on morals, therefore, are unsuitable. Also, we think the reproduction of a story read by the teacher is a valueless kind of exercise. The style of correction of the composition is often, to our minds, very faulty. A teacher never should interlard the lines of an exercise with his own corrections. He should simply underline errors, and place in the margin of the book some understood symbol for the class of correction he desires. Then, exercises should be read by the pupils assembled in class, and criticism should be invited. In letter-writing we have to complain at school after school of complimentary endings being unsuitable, and of beginnings and endings showing abbreviations, being sloped improperly, and being devoid of punctuation. Paraphrasing has somewhat improved, but it is still very weak. The pupils will not endeavour to get a thorough grasp of the meaning of the verses. In a verse on the "Well of St. Keyne," in which the line "He laid on the water a spell" occurs, over half a class of twenty-four pupils took the word "spell" to mean a "rest," and we were confronted with such an explanation as "He laid (*sic*) on the water for a rest."

Grammar showed improvement during the year, but in Standards V. and VI. it was still inferior to what it used to be when a pass-subject. Many teachers now use better methods in teaching Standards III. and IV., and as a consequence, instead of offhand guessing, it is more usual to find pupils observing the functions and relation of the words before them, and reasoning correctly therefrom. We should like to see grammar a pass-subject and geography a class-subject.

History, we think, has deteriorated since freedom in the choice of subjects of study was accorded by the syllabus. The so-called events are often merely incidents; they are not always well chosen; and they are not understood because some previous event with which they are connected has not been treated. Thus, the execution of Charles I. is taken instead of the Great Rebellion; the South Sea Bubble is preferred to the Habeas Corpus Act; and the War of American Independence, or the Indian Mutiny, finds a place, but not the colonisation of America