

his mother-tongue. In Standard IV. inflexion is frequently postponed to the second half of the year, a serious blunder, for a knowledge of it is required as soon as the child begins to compose. It is the easiest part of grammar, and should, in our opinion, be begun even in Standard III.

In many of the larger schools the teachers of Standards V. and VI. have, owing to circumstances over which they have no control, but little opportunity of showing what they could do in grammar under the conditions contemplated by the syllabus. Children are promoted from Standard III. to Standard IV., and from Standard IV. to Standard V., with a very imperfect knowledge of the work prescribed for Standards III. and IV.; and the teacher of Standard V., having to spend most of his time in teaching what ought to have been taught in the classes below his, is unable to do justice to the work prescribed for his own standard, and finally his pupils are sent on to Standard VI. with so heavy an incubus of back work to overtake as to render impossible the acquisition of even a fair working knowledge of the work prescribed for this standard. The headmasters are, of course, to blame for this, for it is their duty to see that every teacher does thoroughly what is set him to do in every subject of his standard, and more especially in organic subjects like grammar, composition, and arithmetic. It is unfair to the teachers of the middle and senior standards that they should have to waste their time and energy in teaching what ought to have been taught in the lower standards. There is a great deal too much of this. The public estimating the progress of the children by standard passes, it is entirely natural that the class-teacher should regard the pass of his own class as the chief aim of his teaching. What should be the chief aim? To this question there can be but one answer: to induce faculty and lay the best possible foundation for future life and work; and so to co-ordinate the work of his school as to secure this result is one of the chief functions of the headmaster.

We are of opinion that the grammar syllabus should be recast and the work prescribed made to bear, from beginning to end, on the practical requirements of composition. We repeat what we have said before about grammar: it was a profound mistake to make it a class-subject. It is a part and parcel of composition, and the two should be made one pass-subject. The present divorce is most unnatural.

One other word we should like to say before passing to the next subject. There is an opinion abroad that in this and some other branches of study technical terms should be avoided. This opinion is founded upon the assumption that words are difficult and things easy. The assumption is entirely false: things are difficult, their names easy; and, when things are known, it is contrary to sound principles of education to denote them by lumbering periphrases instead of by their names.

Composition is improving. Last year's work was, we consider, the best we have had. The chief mistakes were in concord, in the use of relative pronouns and other connective words, and in arrangement, arrangement not only of the phrases and clauses of the sentences, but of the sentences themselves: related sentences were not kept together. Punctuation was, in the majority of cases, very faulty. Analysis of sentences might be made a powerful aid to phrase and clause punctuation, and for sentence punctuation and sentence arrangement nothing is better than the systematic study of the well-built paragraphs of some of the lessons of the reading-books. We recommend more attention to the correct use of "who" and "which." Even in the senior classes many of the children write "which" where they ought to write "who." "Got" is a much-abused word. It is no uncommon thing to find it used five or six times in a dozen lines of composition.

Most pupils succeed in earning in topographical geography sufficient marks (50 per cent.) to entitle them to a pass; but no inconsiderable number of them do it by dint of memorising their text-book. In many schools there is too little map-study and map-drawing, and too much mere grind at the text-books. Geography is, *par excellence*, the cram-subject of the syllabus; and, map-drawing not being prescribed for examination (except in connection with New Zealand), the written examination is powerless to break down the cramming process. This could, however, be done by an oral examination, but an oral examination is unsuitable in pass-subjects. Our experience has convinced us that we could secure much more intelligent and useful work in geography if it were relegated to the class-subjects. Half the matter the children learn is useless, and, worse still, it is too often learnt in the wrong way. The transference of geography from the pass to the class-subjects would by some be objected to on the ground that a knowledge of the subject is of great practical use. Precisely, but only on the condition that the knowledge is useful and acquired in the right way. Physical geography is generally unsatisfactorily done.

Though the efficiency mark in science and object lessons is satisfactory, we are not satisfied with the method by means of which the knowledge was in many cases acquired. In these subjects a considerable proportion of our teachers are slaves to the text-books. To such an extent is this true that they frequently give their lessons with book in hand, every now and then consulting it for information that should have been gathered from personal observation of the object. It is a case of the blind leading the blind; for how can a man lead others to observe what he himself has never taken the trouble to see? It ought to be obvious that the thing is impossible. Nevertheless many teachers act as if it were both possible and rational; for they give object-lessons without objects and science-lessons without experiment! One of the chief aims of science, as of other teaching, is mental discipline. Such discipline lies in methods, and only those methods are disciplinary that compel personal observation, comparison, and inference. This is precisely what many of our so-called science and object lessons fail to do: they appeal only to the memory and are entirely devoid of the spirit of science. We are glad to say, however, that in many schools this department of work is conducted in a truly scientific manner.

We report with pleasure that several of our mistresses are now doing creditable kindergarten work in the infant department. We wish they would give more time to object-lessons and recitation. For the latter they will find "New Recitations for Infants," by Lois Bates, an excellent book.