

in consecutive passages, so that each reads a different passage. Emulation is a valuable help in teaching any subject, so pupils should be encouraged to improve upon each other's rendering of the same passage. Children are only too ready to pick holes in each other's work; and if the teacher can turn this little failing of theirs to good account he should do so. A new passage should not be treated until the teacher is satisfied that the pattern set for the previous one has been fairly reproduced. (3.) Neglecting to group the words and phrase them as one does in speaking; or grouping the wrong words, and so slurring final consonants. Even in the preparatory classes words should be grouped from the first, as "A good cook—is worth much—at any house." "John—and James," not "Johnan—James." As the pupils advance in their standards, their reading should show the rhetorical pauses at the logical divisions of the sentence: yet we often hear, "Why did you pause there—there is no stop there?" Grouping of the kind meant is a valuable aid to analysis and synthesis. (4.) Frequent, and often unnecessary, interruptions by the teacher while the pupil is reading. This tends to flurry and disgust the pupils, and so raise an antagonistic spirit, and finally it produces a feeling of irritation all round. We believe that this antagonism between pupils and teacher in the reading-lesson accounts for the fact that some very earnest teachers fail year after year to produce good reading. It is better to leave the corrections until after the passage has been read, except in the case of glaring errors. (5.) Individual attention not secured during simultaneous reading in the lower classes. Simultaneous reading is a valuable method in the hands of a skilful teacher; but when no care is taken to see that every pupil is actually reading the words, and not merely echoing them or saying them by rote, when the model is badly given by the teacher, or badly reproduced by the children, it must do a vast amount of harm. In the preparatory classes all the pupils should be required to point with long pencils, not with fingers, while reading simultaneously. (6.) The blackboard is not used sufficiently for the correction of mistakes. Corrections written on a blackboard are far more effectual and impressive than oral corrections. The spelling of difficult or unknown words should be educed syllable by syllable from the pupils, and written on the blackboard.

In addition to the faults mentioned in the foregoing paragraph one other is occasionally found, and that is—mumbling; but we are glad to be able to say that it is fast disappearing. Also, a very different kind of reading, but not the less deserving of censure, is received at a few schools—viz., a kind of screaming song like a "town-crier's recitative."

Dictation and spelling showed a very decided improvement in the special tests, and at very few schools was the subject poor. On the general papers, however, carelessness was too often in evidence.

The writing in copybooks and on transcription-papers is very satisfactory at many schools, and the papers in general subjects on the examination days were usually well written, and they showed nice arrangement and setting-out of work. On the whole we have a high opinion of the writing in this district; but, while saying this, we must confess to having heard complaints from business-men about our writing on the ground that it is too sprawling. The series of copybooks in use—Vere Foster's—was blamed for this sprawling, and so it has been decided to adopt Collins's Graphic Series. As regards the complaint itself, no doubt some pupils do write wide when they leave school; but, judging from the writing of the large number of clerks we know who have been through our schools during the past fifteen years, the habit soon disappears, and individuality asserts itself. Then, again, it goes without saying that, when writing is being taught, it is better for the letters to have plenty of breathing-space than to be cramped. But, apart from the teacher's aspect of the question, are not complaints such as this one just mentioned founded upon an incorrect view of the aim of our primary-education system? "It does not," in the words of another Inspector, "profess to make experts in any department, yet this is what seems to be expected in every department: the employer who uses mental arithmetic wants an expert, the employer of clerks wants an expert, and so on *ad libitum*. What we hope is that, with the groundwork we give to pupils passing through our best schools, specialisation of practice will produce the expert, but we cannot supply him ready-made." Or, to quote the words of Mr. Payne, Professor of the Science and Art of Education in the College of Preceptors, London, "Although education is to be a preparation for afterlife, yet it is to be a general, not a professional, preparation, and cannot provide for minute or special contingencies. The object of education is to form the man, not the banker; the man, not the lawyer; the man, not the civil engineer."

In arithmetic the general results showed much improvement, though the subject has been for some years one of the best that we examine. We notice that year after year several Inspectors complain that arithmetic is the subject that is most unsuccessfully treated. We are glad that we have no complaint of this sort to make, although we by no means consider, as some appear to do, that arithmetic is the "be all and end all" of the primary-school course.

In Standard VI. failures to work the limit-number of sums for a pass were very rare, while many pupils readily cleared their examination-cards in a reasonably short time. As no pupil was granted a pass for the standard who obtained under 40 per cent. of the possible marks in arithmetic, and as only 10.9 per cent. of the pupils examined failed for the standard, the subject must be considered good on the whole. The improvement for the year was very marked in this class, and no doubt it is partly accounted for by the fact that the sums set were not as difficult as those of the preceding two or three years. Failure was most frequent in sums in the metric system, and this perhaps was only natural, because for some years hardly any sums have been set in it.

In Standard V. the work was disappointing, and this was the weakest class in arithmetic. Errors were frequent in simplification of fractions, easy percentage calculations, and interest sums requiring time or principal. We think the finding of principal might well be left for candidates for Standard VI. It should be mentioned that the sums set for this standard were relatively more difficult than those set for the higher standard.