

the year. A few teachers, however, either because they have not sufficient backbone to refuse a pass, or because they do not understand the value to themselves and to the district of keeping the pass standard high, have given passes where there was absolutely no warrant for doing so. No consideration should induce a teacher to pass a child who does not deserve to pass. He may, if he please, promote him to the next highest standard even though he has "failed" him. Sometimes it is both wise and expedient to do this.

*Pass and Class Subjects.*—We should like to see these terms entirely done away with. They seem to be responsible for the idea that prevails with some that certain subjects are of less value than others, and that it is a matter of very small moment that they should be neglected. We do not say that the class subjects are not allotted their fair share of time on the time-table; but, from the poor exhibition made by some schools in them at examination time, it is more than evident that the time-table time has not been given. It is only reasonable to expect that the amount of knowledge possessed by the pupils should bear some proportion to the amount of time professed to be spent in imparting it.

*Grammar.*—This is perhaps the most ill-used and most misunderstood subject in the syllabus; yet there is no subject which, if intelligently and thoroughly taught, will furnish a better and more important training. How should it be dealt with? That is the question that puzzles most of us. We feel bound to say that a great deal of what has long been regarded as an essential point in the teaching of grammar—*i.e.*, detailed parsing—is worth very little from the point of view of primary-school education. The points upon which stress should be laid are such as these: (a) Functions of words, phrases, and clauses; (b) analysis and synthesis of sentences; (c) position of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence; (d) active and passive constructions; (e) chief syntactical relations. A minimum amount of inflexional grammar must, of course, be taught, but it should be only a minimum. As an example of what we mean here we may take tense. It is quite sufficient that standard pupils should be able to tell the broad divisions of time—present, past, and future—without entering upon the nicer distinctions of indefinite, imperfect, perfect, &c.; and it is not of much practical importance that a child should be able to rhyme off the whole paradigm of the verb. The endeavour and aim should be to make grammar work in with composition.

*Composition.*—This subject rightly receives a great deal of attention, and quite a number of teachers teach it with enthusiasm. Some of the composition papers handed in were of very high merit, reflecting great credit upon the fullness and thoroughness of the teaching. But composition is admittedly not an easy subject. The chief difficulty lies in this: that children cannot be got to write much about subjects which are outside the range of their observation and experience. How can we impart to them ideas and conceptions, and how can we train them to express these ideas and conceptions in suitable language? One thing seems very clear, and it is this: Children seem to lose their almost divine gift of imagination not long after they enter our schools. A few short years and the bright, imaginative, and talkative child of five is converted into the stilted, unresponsive, and circumscribed school-boy whom we so well know. There must be something wrong somewhere, for such development is quite unnatural, and contrary to the true idea of education. Can it be avoided? Is it inevitable? We should, as teachers, face these questions and try to answer them. One great need in the early part of school education is for more conversation lessons in which children may be allowed to talk freely to the teacher, to answer and ask questions, and to have their inquiring and observant minds continually brought into contact with new and interesting objects and ideas. Indeed, conversation lessons should be made a great feature of our whole school course; and, speaking generally, children should be encouraged to talk much more freely to their teachers than they are accustomed to do. Oral composition is another name for a conversation lesson, and it is only by means of such lessons that good composition will ever be got.

*Reading.*—A higher standard should be aimed at in this subject. The most common faults throughout the district are rapidity of utterance and its inevitable concomitant indistinctness. Intelligent expression is also sadly lacking. Children should be so taught to read that an ordinary listener may be able clearly to make out every word and to understand the sense of the passage read. The faults mentioned above as occurring in reading are accentuated in recitation. Here the fast reader has become a "gabbler." From one point of view, no doubt the main thing to be aimed at is correct repetition; but surely it is worth a great deal to be able to add to correct repetition, ease and grace in recitation. The necessity of reading as many books as possible cannot be over-emphasized. The same lesson should not be read too often; most of the words used in one lesson occur again frequently in succeeding lessons. Reading should not be made "to wait" for spelling and subject-matter. Two books at least should be read in every class, and if possible one of these books should not be what is known as a reader. Abridged editions, suitable for children, of biographies and novels are now published. Quite a number of these are on exhibition in the teachers' room at the Board's office. Some very fine continuous stories for our infants and Standard I. pupils are also available. We may mention two or three of these here: "The Story of a Cat," "The Lost Pigs," "The Three Monkeys." These are published by Bell and Sons, and are under the general title "Books for Young Readers." A very fine series of books suitable for infants is also published by Nelson. The fairy tale, nursery rhyme, and fable should have a prominent place in our infant classes.

*Geography.*—Though by an increasingly large number of teachers this subject is treated in an intelligent and interesting manner, there is still a tendency to rely too exclusively upon text-books and to make the teaching a process of cramming the names of places, the only ideas of which the unfortunate learners receive are dots, or strokes, or certain shapes on the map. So long as we are content only to put a text-book into the hands of the scholars and say, "There, learn that," so long will the time and effort we spend for the most part be vain and unproductive of real benefit. We recognise that the system of examination that has obtained everywhere is largely responsible