

**READING.**—As reported last year, in a considerable number of schools reading receives very intelligent treatment, being characterized by fluency and good expression. On the other hand, in a few schools the pupils are allowed to read too hurriedly, with the consequence that phrasing, articulation, enunciation, &c., do not receive the attention they deserve.

We would recommend that, particularly in the lower classes, more special lessons should be given, in which, instead of dealing with all the essentials of good reading, some one feature, such as phrasing, emphasis, volume, or pause, should be dealt with. To crowd too much into one lesson, as is often done, simply leads to confusion on the part of the pupils, who can hardly be expected to grasp all that is attempted to be taught. How absurd it would be for a teacher in the initial stages of, say, a lesson in writing, to deal with more than one principle at a time!

More model reading, illustrated by blackboard exercises culled mainly from the lesson for the day, should be given, especially in the lower classes, where the children are at the imitative stage, and are readily impressed with what they hear or see.

**COMPOSITION.**—The absence of a sound training in those portions of formal grammar that bear directly on composition is bringing in its train many defects in the written essays. A great number of children are now leaving school ignorant of the mechanism of even the simplest sentence. We are of opinion that, to teach composition thoroughly, it is absolutely necessary to study the grammar of the language more fully than at present. We do not advocate returning to the drudgery of former years, but now so little grammar is taught that it is not uncommon to find pupils, even in the higher standards, unable to recognise the subject and predicate of an easy sentence.

We should also like to see the pupils better trained in the power of differentiating between the different uses of words. An effort should be made to extend the vocabulary more than is done now, so that they may be able to use the truest and most appropriate words.

**WRITING.**—The general clerical work is, on the whole, carefully done, but in the special writing-books a want of uniformity of style and continuity of treatment were not infrequently noticeable.

Where blank books are used, they should be kept entirely for set headlines and every lesson dated. It is often found that the style of writing varies considerably in the different standards of the same school. Whatever system of writing and figuring is adopted, the principles of it should be adhered to from the preparatory classes to the highest standard.

**SPELLING AND DICTATION.**—The special spelling test is characterized by accuracy. Punctuation, however, in the dictation exercises, appears to be taught in a somewhat haphazard way. In schools where composition receives systematic treatment, it generally follows that the dictation test is punctuated intelligently, for it stands to reason, if a pupil has a good grip of sentence-structure, he is in a better position to understand the principles underlying correct punctuation.

There is a tendency on the part of inexperienced teachers to devote an undue amount of time to the difficult and more uncommon words of the text-book, to the sacrifice of the simpler words of every-day life. It is surely of more consequence that special attention should be paid, not to jawbreakers, but to those words which will form part and parcel of the vocabulary the child will be called upon to use in his after-life.

Moreover, it is not unusual to find that the whole of the time set apart for a spelling lesson is used up in dictating a long list of the most difficult words and, consequently, very little actual teaching of spelling is undertaken. We should like to see more use made of the blackboard in the course of the spelling lesson.

**RECITATION.**—The standard aimed at when teaching recitation is certainly not high. Hardly any attempt is made to get the pupils to recite with anything at all approaching elocutionary effect. It would, no doubt, be unreasonable to demand much in the way of elocution, yet some of the simpler rules bearing on delivery are worthy of greater attention being given to them. Recitation too often degenerates into mere repetition.

**ARITHMETIC.**—The subject is almost, without exception, logically and neatly set out, but leaves much to be desired with respect to accuracy, more particularly in the higher classes.

While we agree that the study of arithmetic has its cultural effect in training the pupils to think closely and logically, yet it has also a bread-and-butter value. Arithmetic is perhaps the subject, more than any other, that is needed in almost every walk of life, but the arithmetic of business does not concern itself so much with the solving of problems, but with the quick and accurate manipulation of figures. While we admit that the solution of problems affords an excellent mental exercise, yet, at the same time, we feel there is a tendency to devote too much time to this class of work, to the detriment of a sound training in the mechanical side of arithmetic; more time could with advantage be given, in the lower standards, to a thorough grounding in the tables and to the ordinary mechanical processes. Where the teaching fails in this respect, the results of our examination almost invariably reveal a lamentable weakness, not so much in the method, but in the accuracy of the work in the higher classes.

**SINGING.**—We cannot report any marked advance in the cultivation of vocal music. In many cases the teacher might make a better selection of songs; year after year the same hackneyed songs are heard. The pupils must indeed become weary of "Down by the Swanee River," "Scotland's Burning," and "Soldiers of the King." Surely there are plenty of bright and sparkling songs now published, from which a suitable choice might be made.

In the larger schools, part-singing might be more generally taken up. In only one of these schools did we find it taught in a satisfactory manner.

**PHYSICAL INSTRUCTION.**—Military drill or physical instruction is taken up in almost every school, and, on the whole, is conducted in a satisfactory manner. The most noticeable weakness