

results from freedom of classification falling into the hands of the incompetent or of those who, through want of familiarity with a high standard, are prone to obey the dictate of their hearts, we impose our own classification in those schools where we find, as an outcome of careful testing, that the teacher's judgment is at fault. On the whole, we find that the teachers have risen well to their responsibility, and are exercising a wise discretion in the discharge of this most important branch of their work.

The methods of teaching continue to improve steadily, with the result that the educational aspect has due prominence, and, as a consequence of the teacher's closer intimacy with educational literature and the scientific principles underlying the art of teaching, we generally find a definiteness of aim and an economy of effort that are productive of good result. But there are exceptions—namely, teachers who continue to treat subjects in isolation, who divorce spelling from the use of the word spelt, who do not insist on the application of mental arithmetic to the written problems, or who do not insist on every written exercise being considered a writing-lesson. Others, again, do not apply the rules taught in the reading and recitation to the ordinary speech and oral answering of their pupils. With these, who fortunately are in the minority, the teaching is wanting in fertility, and lacks satisfactory educative effect.

One of the most striking features of modern education is the introduction of manipulative exercises which not only develop manual dexterity at an age when it must be developed if it is to reach a high pitch in later years, but also keep the child in touch with his environment. By giving him something to do which he recognizes as definitely useful, these exercises implant in him the germ of the idea of utility which will eventually fructify in social service, the very condition of the existence of civilization. Most of our teachers have shown a fine appreciation of the scope and aim of this practical education; but others, by not counteracting the tendency to routine, have failed to regard the fact that the limit of the manual side is reached when, through the absence of interest, it ceases to develop the intellectual as well as the physical powers of the pupils. In this connexion we are pleased to note a large increase in the number of gardens as adjuncts to our small schools where the zeal and industry of our young teachers—mostly women—are doing much to invest the school subjects with reality, and, incidentally, are arousing such an interest in horticulture as cannot fail to advance a profitable domestic industry and to provide a delightful hobby for maturer years. In all our educational arrangements we should endeavour to realize clearly what is to be the life of the average pupil when he leaves school; and so far as a school will have helped him to occupy his spare time profitably and pleasantly, to that extent will it have been valuable to him and to the community of which he is a member.

In the majority of our schools reading is fluent and accurate in the middle and senior classes. Teachers recognize that in this subject the chief aims should be the early acquirement of ready association between sign and sound, the intelligent study of printed matter, and the cultivation of the taste for books. The first of these aims is being well achieved in our junior classes, and we note with approval the increasing use of lip and tongue exercises; but we regret that exercises in phonics are not systematically continued in the middle classes. It is in these classes that the impurity of speech to which we have year by year referred sets in, and it is just in these classes that the defect can be most easily eradicated. While teachers are very solicitous about the correctness of the matter of the pupils' answers, with some the niceties of oral expression do not receive the attention necessary for forming a style of delivery which, while expressing fully the sense of the passage, gives the oral composition all the power, grace, and beauty of which it is susceptible. In this connexion it is pleasing to be able to refer to the stimulating effect produced by those teachers who train their pupils to ask questions. In the past the pupil has been either the passive recipient or the obedient responder; but, by an inversion of this order through a systematic training of the pupil to question his teacher or his classmates, there have resulted, on the part of the pupil, a mental alertness, and, on the part of the teacher, a familiarity with the child's mental attitude towards the subject that could not have been produced as readily by any other means.

Inquiry as to the use of the school and other libraries by pupils convinces us that the reading-habit is on the increase, and that pupils are utilizing some of their spare time with pleasure and profit. In composition exercises the influence of general reading is frequently shown by the fairly wide knowledge of the subject-matter, and by the free and natural expression of the pupils' ideas. These exercises are remarkably free from grammatical errors, but too frequently we have to find fault with the arrangement of both sentence and paragraph. We again commend to teachers the desirability of insisting that every essay should be preceded by a plan or scheme, and that the exercise should be written in accordance with that plan. In schools where this system is followed the composition is invariably good. Formal grammar continues to receive satisfactory attention; analysis and synthesis are well done; but in many instances the functions of words do not receive adequate attention, while punctuation is of poor quality.

Spelling is very good throughout the district; in the lower and senior classes writing is good, but in the middle classes it is of uneven quality.

By a free use of concrete methods in the junior classes a good foundation is being laid for the arithmetic of the middle and senior classes. In many schools, however, the use of counters is too long continued, with the result that the drill in number-work so requisite for rapid and accurate calculation is not commenced as early as it should be. In the middle and senior classes the methods of presentation are good; but we still find too much reliance placed on what may be called "type" work, with the result that when pupils meet with a question in a setting somewhat different from the "type" setting they find difficulty in dealing with it. Many of the problems chosen necessitate long arithmetical calculations, which tend to obscure the principle involved in the question. This, besides arousing in the pupil a distaste for the subject, materially interferes with the educative effect that should be the aim of the teacher. In schools where this subject is most successfully treated it will be found that tables are well taught and well memorized, systematic work in mental arithmetic introductory to written work is carried on, problems involving short calculations are used, and oral explanation of processes is insisted on. Notwithstanding the weaknesses we have referred to, the subject is one of the best in our schools.