

world of mischief to the young, by giving them the idea that their deficiencies are all attributable to the ignorance or unskillfulness of their Teacher, and none to their own negligence or dullness. To expect our Schools to flourish in the circumstances described, is about as reasonable 'as to expect a thaw in Zembla.'

*"Of the Pupils.*—In my District of Inspection there are by the Returns, 4,028 learning spelling, 3,820 reading, 2,890 writing, 2,426 arithmetic 613 common and other needle-work, 477 English grammar, 448 geography, 668 French, and some also studying history, book-keeping, geometry, mensuration and algebra.

*"Branches of Instruction.*—Spelling is taught very imperfectly in many of the Schools. Too little attention is paid to the division of words into syllables. The practice too is very common of selecting for the spelling exercise only the larger words, to the exclusion of the smaller ones which are of more frequent occurrence, I have frequently found whole classes capable of spelling all the long words in their lesson, and unable to spell and distinguish such words as *one, of, were, there,* and so on. The best remedy is to spell every thing that is read, and to practice, whenever it is practicable, the important exercise of writing to dictation.

*"Reading.*—In many of the Schools the reading is fluent enough, perhaps too much so. The children in general read too fast, pay no attention to, or are not instructed in either the natural or conventional pauses; some read so low as to be almost inaudible, while others again raise their voices to such a pitch as to destroy all modulation. It is a matter of deep regret that so little attention should be given to the cultivation of natural and intelligent reading. The art is not so easy as some may suppose, but that is the very reason why it should form the subject of the Teacher's most careful study. I hope soon to see it receive at the hands of all concerned that attention which its importance demands. Another defect, and one if possible to be still more lamented, is the not understanding what is read. In many of the Schools the Teachers content themselves with simply hearing their classes read, and devote no time to the explanation of the subject read. I could fill pages with the inappropriate and ludicrous

answers to the simplest questions arising naturally out of the text. But honorable exception must be made in favour of a considerable number of the Schools where great care is taken, and not a little talent brought to bear upon this important part of school business, where no lesson, however short, is passed over, till all, even the least intelligent of the class, have thoroughly understood it. I am sorry to say that I cannot include in this description quite all the trained Teachers employed in the Northern District.

*"Writing.*—There are a few Schools, though perhaps not equal in other respects, in which writing has attained a high degree of perfection. The specimens exhibited are really beautiful. But such Schools bear a very small proportion to the whole. The common method of teaching this branch is for the Teacher to prepare the copy-book by writing a line across the top of the page, and then setting the pupil to imitate it; and it is painful to add, that in many instances, as far as regards calligraphy and orthography, nothing could be more unfortunate than success. To make matters worse, the pupils are often supplied with bad materials. Inferior paper, pens, and ink, are very frequently preferred because they are cheaper. The desks too are often found ill suited for the purpose, some too high, others too low, some too much inclined, others perfectly flat, and in one or two instances, no desks at all, or, by the way of substitute, the benches the children sit on. The frequent change of Teachers, as already alluded to, has its bad effects on this as in every other branch. One term the pupils are imitating one Teacher's hand, another term, another's; this Summer a female's, next Winter a man's; and so in one continual round, in which there is nothing constant but change. To remedy in some measure this defect, I would strongly urge upon the Department the importance of supplying the Schools, through their Book Agents, with a complete and uniform set of printed lines, from which the children might copy, rather than from those written by their different Teachers.

*"Arithmetic.*—This branch, as a science, is taught in only a few Schools; but as an art in which proficiency is attained by constant and stimulating practice, it is taught well in many of the Schools in this district. It seems,