only improve the pupil's reading and spelling, but will be a stimulus to private reading and study, and will enlarge his stock of words and ideas, while making him familiar with the thoughts of higher minds. For this subject, Scott's facile verse was most frequently selected during the past year. In one instance Goldsmith was chosen, and in another, Wilson. Scenes, characters, incidents, and allusions had been grasped, and the mere repetition of the passages selected may be termed almost perfect. In few instances, however, was the style of repetition worthy of much praise, and the paraphrasing was generally weak.—A. OGILVY BARRIE, Esq., M.A.

I find that during the year every specific subject has been taken up except German, Mechanics, Chemistry, and Magnetism, in the following proportions :—

	Mathematics.	English Literature.	Latin.	Greek.	French.	Animal Physiology.	Light and Heat.	Physical Geography.	Botany.
Presented	113	560	346	31	54	68	11	218	20
Passed	83	395	282	24	42	40	7	137	15
Percentage of failures	27	29	18	25	22	41	37	37	25

English literature is, as might be expected, and properly, the favourite one. The choice of passages has been generally judicious, but in many cases there has been a wrong conception as to the requirements. Few of the failures are due to lack of memory in repetition, many to want of proper expression, more still to insufficient comprehension and unmeaning paraphrase. The committing to memory, expressive repetition, and thorough understanding of 200 lines of classical poetry is an educational result worth paying for. The mere committing to memory without the other two is valueless, and I have treated it as such.—JOHN KERR, Esq., M.A.

I. Correspondence of the Journal of Education.

1. COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

Editor Journal of Education.

SIR,—The subject of bringing the work done in our High and Public Schools under uniform examinations is one which is at present engaging considerable attention. We have the examinations for admission to High Schools, and we shall probably soon have the intermediate examinations. The former has already done much in directing the labours of those who prepare pupils for the entrance examinations, and I have no doubt the latter, with its payment by results, will very materially increase the efficiency of High Schools.

A uniform examination will be provided to test the work done in these Schools, and I think a somewhat similar test would be of very great advantage to our Public Schools. During the present year competitive examinations have been held in a few counties with, so far as we may judge from published reports, highly satisfactory results. Our Public Schools are working under a uniform programme, and might very properly be brought under uniform competitive examinations by the Council of Public Instruction prescribing regulations and furnishing printed questions. The examination could be held in two or more places in every county, and the papers examined by the present County Boards or by other suitable persons.

To pupils attaining a certain standing, certificates might be given entitling the holders of them to act as pupil teachers in Public Schools, or to enter a High School. By this means the present entrance examination could be dispensed with, as it is but an examination of Public School pupils. If examinations of this kind were held, the Public Schools would be brought into direct competition with each other, a healthy emulation would be developed, and new life infused into teachers and pupils. I feel confident also that a larger number of pupils would find their way into High Schools; for pupils having passed a creditable examination would feel a new ambition, and their parents would be inclined to give them the advantage of higher facilities. As an evidence of this, several pupils who distinguished themselves at a competitive examination held in this county last spring have already gone to High Schools, and more will go in January. Local efforts for increasing the interest, by procuring prizes for successful candidates, could still be made, and by the means suggested above regularity, uniformity and increased efficiency would be secured. I believe this subject is worthy of consideration, and that it will commend itself to the active workers in the cause of education, who are disposed to put forth every exertion and adopt every means calculated to bring our progressive School system still nearer to perfection.

Respectfully yours,
INSPECTOR.

December 2nd, 1875.

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2. SIMPLIFICATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Spoken language is natural to man. The ability to develop it more than any other one thing, perhaps, distinguishes man from all other animals. Other animals can reason to some extent, but man alone is able to develop a spoken language whereby thoughts or concepts of the mind are conveyed by articulate sounds. *Instructive reason* differs from the *faculty of reasoning* in this, that the former is experimental only, and confined to those things which more directly pertain to the necessities or comforts of the animal, whilst the latter covers the whole range of knowledge. The distinguishing feature of human reasoning is, that it can, by the use of language, accept a conclusion once gained, and make this the starting point of a new course of reasoning. Thus man is enabled to profit by the experience of former generations, and to convey any newly acquired knowledge to his successors, whilst all the knowledge or experience of other animals is lost, and cannot in this way be transmitted from generation to generation.

Thus we see the importance of spoken language to man, which we are apt to overlook as a matter of course.

Spoken language precedes written language. Indeed there are tribes of people whose language has for the first time been reduced to writing by missionaries in the last generation. Written language however, is an afterthought. It is the result of contrivance in order to preserve that which when once spoken would otherwise be gone, except as it remained in the memory of the hearer. It bears the same relation to spoken language that memory does to thought.

Spoken language, which is first in time, appeals only to the ear. Written language appeals to the ear through the eye, and its development presupposes some degree of cultivation.

The history of written language is full of interest. It shows the processes through which the mind has been experimentally led before reaching that which is now recognised as the true basis of written language, viz. : the representation of the few elementary sounds heard in speech. In Ancient Egypt, symbols were used as the signs of ideas, and even now we find that the eye is used as a symbol of watchfulness, the lamb of innocence, and the lion of strength. All attempts to represent continuous thought by symbols must necessarily be vague and unsatisfactory. To obviate this, we find that very early in history, alphabets were introduced in which the letters more or less accurately represented the elementary sounds of the human voice.

However much language may differ, the elementary sounds are very similar in all languages, because the organs of speech are very much the same in all. The letters used to represent these sounds are, however, entirely arbitrary, and differ very much among themselves, as in the Arabic, the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Chinese languages. The letters used in printing our language are adopted from the Latin language. They are the same in the main with the letters in all the Romance languages, and came originally from Phœnicia. The very name *Alphabet* shows this history, for it is but an abbreviation of the names of the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, *Alpha, Beta;* just in the same way as we sometimes call our alphabet the a, b, c.

This Roman Alphabet was ill suited to represent the numerous sounds of our language, because it furnished but 18 consonants, besides the three redundant letters c, q, and x, to represent the 25 consonantal sounds of the language, and but five vowel letters to represent its 19 vowel sounds. Consequently many modes of compensation and combination were resorted to, differing ofttimes according to the source whence a word found its way into the language. Had our language been originally analyzed into its elements, and a different sign been used to represent each sound, its orthography would have been much simplified. But we have received our language *as it is*, freighted with its precious treasures of belles lettres, which few scholars are willing to sacrifice to the advantages of a purely phonetic print, however desirable in other respects.

All agree, however, that it is desirable to simplify our orthography in every admissible way. There are but two modes of accomplishing this end. We must either introduce new letters, or use diacritical notation.

I. The introduction of new letters has proven a failure. American and English Phoneticians, working in this direction, discarded