

As a general thing, Grammar is presented to the child too early. Rules are well enough, but the successful artist must see and observe and be vividly impressed with the picture presented to his eye. The skillful physician depends upon observation and experience for the correctness of his diagnosis.

*Arithmetic.*—A much better system of teaching this important branch obtains now throughout the county than that which formerly existed.

The prevailing error seemed to be in plunging the child at once into the mysteries of abstract figures, where he was left to wander for weeks in a region of useless and incomprehensible signs. Now the teacher will, through the medium of objects or the ball frame, give an intelligent idea of number, make plain the principles involved, and, step by step, lead the young mind from the concrete to the abstract, from the known to the unknown. Then, having thoroughly classified his pupils and expounded the rule, he will call into his service the sympathy of numbers as the most effective stimulant, and go on successfully with the work of explaining and illustrating.

A too frequent and general error is an insufficient attention paid to reviewing. The pupil is allowed to take his book and slate, and with an assumed air of business to plunge into a lot of new exercises in blissful ignorance of rule or principles, and waste his time in vain and misdirected efforts. In some schools I have found a "select few," whose reputed standing as the "advanced class" had prevented their giving attention to the teacher's explanations on the board, so long as they enjoyed the reputation of having "puzzled the teacher." I also found it a source of amusement, if not satisfaction, to ask such a class a few questions involving the first principles in arithmetic, as they were almost invariably answered by a look of blank astonishment, strongly suggestive of ignorance upon that subject.

*Reading.*—I am pleased to be able to report a gradual improvement in this subject. That "old style" of singing the lesson in hollow, monotonous tones, has, in a great measure, given way to a distinct, impressive, and intelligent system of reading. Hitherto the importance of this branch did not, in many schools, seem to be fully appreciated, and other more advanced studies were allowed to infringe upon the time allotted to this. A prolific cause of much of the indifferent reading inflicted upon us, is the want of attention paid to the elementary sounds of the language. In some instances, upon questioning the class, I have found that modulation of the voice, inflection and emphasis were altogether beyond the scope of their comprehension. I have invariably urged the imitation of the natural tones of voice, as employed in common conversation, which suggestion has been followed by the most satisfactory results. There is a vast difference between an intelligent exercise of the mind in thinking and feeling, and a mere parrot-like action of the vocal organs in a rapid enunciation of words, which is too often palmed off as reading. Still another cause tending to retard progress in this branch is the unwise and arbitrary interference of parents with the prerogative of the teacher, in insisting upon a premature advancement of their children from one reader to a higher number before they have attained the required proficiency.

*Music and Drawing.*—These exercises I regard not only as pleasing recreations from the sterner studies, but as successful means of communicating and acquiring knowledge; and would earnestly recommend that more time and attention be paid to them in every school. In this respect we are certainly behind our American neighbours. Every teacher, without making it a specialty, should be qualified to impart the rudiments of the useful art of Drawing. Its acquisition is a mental relaxation, while in point of usefulness words are feeble instruments in description compared with the delineations of the pencil.

*Returns.*—The *A* returns have been found generally satisfactory, while the *B* returns are, as usual, far from being reliable.

Some of them are nothing more than a complication of errors, contradictions and absurdities.