

of the text itself. We consider that in the upper classes pupils should have some knowledge of the difference between prose and poetry, should be taught to appreciate some of the simpler and more obvious figures of speech, and should at least have their attention directed to the metre and rhythm of the passages committed to memory. These remarks are by no means intended to apply to all schools, in many of which teachers are fully alive to the possibilities presented by "recitation," and have been successful in making the subject one of great and enduring interest.

WRITING.—The quality of the writing has been and will continue to be interfered with for some time to come, owing to the change in copy-books introduced during the course of the year. On the whole, however, the subject may be characterized as satisfactory, though a word of warning is necessary to those schools where much of the work is being done on writing-blocks. Many of these consist of flimsy unruled paper, on which it is extremely difficult to secure neat, well arranged, methodical work. The substitute of paper for slate is to be commended and encouraged, but care should be taken to insure that no deterioration in penmanship follows the change, and this can be done only by refusing to tolerate careless scribbling and by insisting on a fair degree of neatness in setting forth all work attempted.

SPELLING AND WORD-BUILDING.—The appearance made in spelling when the tests applied were taken from the reading-books in use was generally creditable, and tends to show that the subject is receiving generous and successful treatment. At the central examinations for certificates of proficiency, however, much of the spelling was disappointing, though the tests were generally admitted to be reasonable, and should have been well within the reach of the highest class. The prevalence of error under these circumstances would seem to imply that though much has been done in the matter of widening the scope of reading, a good deal yet remains to be accomplished before pupils acquire that intimate knowledge of word-form which correct spelling demands. Word-building very properly plays a large part in the instruction given in the lower classes under the comprehensive term "English." Here it forms the groundwork of spelling lessons, and incidentally, when properly applied, is an important factor in developing power of verbal expression and in training pupils to collect and join together a number of short statements, forming thereby a most useful aid to oral composition. The formation of new words by the addition of prefix or suffix, by change of vowel, by insertion of letters, or by whatever means custom has decided should be employed, the tracing of an element or root through various parts of speech having a common origin, are all extremely useful exercises and might well be applied more frequently in the upper classes, whose instruction in spelling in some cases is confined mainly to preparing lists of words selected from the reading-book.

COMPOSITION.—No subject of the syllabus forms a more reliable index of the efficiency of the school than composition, for the power of being able to write with perspicuity, ease, and fullness demands the intelligent application of knowledge, which, in the case of the normal pupil, is the outcome of careful, methodical, and approved training. The exercises submitted at our visits with notice, or examined during the course of other visits, though varying considerably in quality, on the whole maintained a satisfactory level. In some of the schools, however, the appearance made was disappointing, no real grasp of the subject being shown, and the efforts even of upper-class pupils being short, incoherent, and lacking in elementary power of expression. These remarks apply more particularly to the smaller schools, where the time available for systematic teaching is often unduly limited. Still, much can be done even under these circumstances, when teachers realize the importance of the subject and the absolute necessity for a well-arranged course of instruction, having for its object certain definite aims, to be realized from stage to stage, and appreciating the advantage of co-ordinating with the composition lessons other subjects of the curriculum. Nothing is of greater assistance in enabling pupils to express with clearness their thoughts on paper than oral drill, which should be applied during all stages of composition-teaching. Many teachers have a mistaken idea that oral composition is a special perquisite of the lower classes, and that for older children an entirely different form of treatment is needed. Oral drill is necessary during all stages, and should constantly be employed in the upper as well as in the lower classes, not only at fixed times, when composition subjects are being dealt with, but during the progress of lessons in reading, geography, history, science, and other suitable subjects. It is the ability to clothe in fitting garb the thoughts and ideas that arise during the course of each day's work that leads ultimately to the power of being able to write with ease, fluency, and expression. In this connection we may add that oral answering still leaves much to be desired, for in too many cases it fails in fully and accurately conveying the speaker's meaning, and often, where reasonable fullness obtains, it is stilted, formal, and altogether wanting in ease and naturalness. It is difficult to understand why a teacher, after a year's intercourse, and in many country schools after several years of such intercourse, should be unable to train his pupils to speak freely, fully, and intelligently on subjects to which special attention has been directed. We have found that in some schools the writing of composition exercises is deferred until pupils have reached the Third Standard. Quite apart from the fact that it is contrary to regulation, such method does not in any way commend itself to us. Oral composition should be begun during the earlier stages of school life, and should quickly lead on to written expression of thought and observation. Pupils should be trained in the evolution and expression of ideas on simple subjects in the preparatory classes, where a beginning might well be made in self-reliance and independence through the medium of written speech. The goal to be aimed at here is not the exercise free from grammatical errors and faulty English, but the gradual evolution of power to think and remember, and ability to express simple ideas with some degree of accuracy. Closely allied with composition is what is commonly known as "English." The two subjects as we understand them in the schools ought never to be dissociated, the former being the objective to which the latter leads, or ought to lead. Though in some schools the need for a definite plan of English-teaching is recognized