

read as a whole, and the pupils required to rewrite it, as closely as possible to the original, after the one reading. The advocates of this method claim that the ordinary dictation lesson has no virtue in the teaching of spelling. In teaching spelling and word-building insufficient attention is given to the teaching of prefixes and suffixes and to the roots of common words. Experiments in spelling and dictation would be welcomed.

*Writing.*—The standard of writing varies a good deal from school to school. Much of it lacks that regularity, uniformity, and care which comes of systematic teaching and insistence upon neatness in all written work. Many regard it merely as a means to an end, and not as in itself a training in the formation of character and in the development of taste. Print writing in the standard classes seems to be on the ebb; the first wave of enthusiasm has spent itself. Teachers have been unnerved by public criticism of the innovation. Many have introduced it without having studied the fundamentals underlying the successful teaching of the subject. Without system the subject is chaotic; with system it can be a thing of beauty, fostering neatness, precision, despatch, and artistry. In the primer departments, because of its obvious advantages, print will continue to be taught. In Standards I and II there is a great lack of uniformity in the writing, due largely to the variation in practice in teaching the subject. Some use copybooks—most do not; some use lead-pencils in both classes, others pens in both; the pupils in some Standard I classes are required to use single-lined paper, while others write between double lines even in Standard III. Lead-pencils and double-lined paper might well be used in Standard I, the best writers being allowed to use pens towards the end of the year. In Standard II pens should be used with double-lined paper till the middle of the year, and subsequently all work should be done on single-lined paper. Judging by the marks awarded to pupils in the periodical examinations in this subject, some teachers have a poor appreciation of what good work is. When copybooks were in general use it is probable that the headlines in them served as a useful standard to aid the teacher's judgment of the quality of the writing in his school or class. In the highest standards some very good writing is done, more especially in the large schools; possibly the formal formation of letters is persisted in too long, for when the child leaves school there comes a break before a running hand is developed, and as a consequence the public bemoans the fact that the writing of the son is vastly inferior to that of the father. Perhaps so; but the ultimate product may not be. Possibly the transition period should begin earlier, when the pupils are still under the teacher's care and instruction.

*Composition* is improving, and in few schools is it unsatisfactory. In the primer classes oral composition is well taught, but in Standards I and II there are serious defects in the teaching of this branch. For purposes of instruction the plan of calling upon some one or two children to give a full connected account of any lesson is preferable to the method of question and answer; the latter is more appropriate to examination than to teaching. In these classes also too much written composition is done. Glover's English Class-books and Nisbet's Self-help English Cards will be found to be extremely useful to the teacher in both oral and written composition. Essay-writing in Standards III to VI is on the whole good, especially in those schools where the instruction has not been of too formal a nature. Imaginative subjects are generally well done, but the progress in this type appears to have been at the expense of another type, the descriptive. Pupils are seldom able to give (say) a clear concise description of some industrial process, or to give explicit directions for making a garden, without being subject to serious literary lapses. The revolt against the wholly prosaic essay of former years appears to have swept away the little good that was commingled with the much bad; it now appears necessary to reinstate that good. The essays of many pupils are too short, and this largely because the teacher cramps their flow of words. If a pupil writes with such zeal that the subject becomes breathlessly interesting, he may write page after page without effort. But if his mind is centred upon spellings, handwriting, and the mechanical side of composition, his matter becomes more correct and less interesting. Quantity of work leads to quality, and not *vice versa*. We frequently hear teachers say, "Do ten lines well rather than fifty lines badly." Such a teacher is apt to forget that the pupil who writes a little invariably does it with painful effort. There is always hope for the boy or girl whose literary output is prodigal. In letter-writing originality and brightness of expression are very rare—formalism holds sway; but this, unfortunately, is not displayed where one might reasonably expect to find it—in the superscription and the conclusion. The very appearance of a letter should be attractive. Grammar is taught with a fair measure of success. Too much attention is given to analysis and too little to sentence-structure. If each passage used for analysis were reconstructed and the pupils led to see the reasons for the placing of the clauses they would gain some ideas of sentence-structure, and their composition exercises would improve accordingly. Analysis, moreover, is still taught too much by rule of thumb; too frequently the "hunt" for sign words supplants reasoning; a clause introduced by "where" is immediately set down as an adverbial one. This kind of teaching renders the study of the subject valueless.

*Arithmetic* continues to be a strong subject, but inaccuracy is still too common. This is probably due to faulty teaching in Standard I. Too many teachers still persist in this class in dealing with large incomprehensible numbers before their pupils have received a thorough grounding in the small-number work in the form of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division tables—the foundation of all sound arithmetic. It is doubtful whether too much is not expected in the way of number work from pupils preparing for Standard I. The work is done at the expense of the pupils' manual dexterity; of his physique, as that is fostered by dancing, organized games, and play; and of his intelligence, in so far as that is developed by reading, acting, and discussion. In Standard I oral arithmetic is often weak; this is due largely to the fact that the teacher relies too much on an arithmetic-book, the pupils being condemned to spend nearly an hour a day attempting to work problems, instead of occupying their time with tables and straightforward mechanical work. In the upper classes the work varies considerably from school to school, but it is generally of a high standard.