

class at least one grade easier than the class Reader. Such a test eliminates the "memory element" which, especially in the classes below Standard IV., counts for a good deal when the pupils are using a book which they have read perhaps three times at least. In some schools the strange book was read just as fluently and as expressively as the class Reader; in others the result was quite otherwise: pupils who could read fluently from their own book had often difficulty in making out similar words and phrases occurring in the strange book, showing clearly that in the apparent fluent reading from their class-books memory was playing a very important part. Generally speaking, the mechanical aspect of the reading lesson is sufficiently recognised. It must not be forgotten, however, that ability "to phrase accurately, to enunciate distinctly, and to render expressively" any suitable passage that may be presented constitutes, after all, only the lesser of the two objects for which reading appears in the syllabus. The other and infinitely more important object is that the pupils should be able to understand what they read, and that they should be able in a measure to appreciate the beauty and suitability of the phrases and words used in the lessons. The teaching of reading "should awaken an interest in and an appreciation for good literature. To teach children to read without developing in them a spirit of literary appreciation is to do but a small part of our duty." Their attention should be continually directed both in prose and in poetry to words, phrases, or lines which are aptly and appropriately used. We would direct the attention of teachers to the following points in connection with the teaching of reading. They suggest remedies for certain outstanding defects.

- (1.) Definite teaching should be given to each class in syllabification; particular care being taken to insure purity of vowel-sound. Here is a series of words which might profitably be given every day in every school: *house, pound, ground, round, bounce, how, cow, now, brown, gown, &c.* A very marked tendency exists in some parts to convert *the* into *thay*, *be* into *bay*, *he* into *hay*, &c. Incidental teaching in this matter is not sufficient to correct tendencies which are fast becoming fixed habits of speech. Teachers should note carefully the peculiarities of their districts, and by constant daily practice endeavour to get rid of the defects they notice.
- (2.) More attention should be given to subject-matter. The pupils should be interested in the lesson before they begin to read it in class. If they have read it at home they should be questioned upon its contents. At the end of the lesson a summary of it should be asked from the class. Geographical and historical allusions should always be touched upon.
- (3.) A certain number of words and phrases should be dealt with—not necessarily those which are most abstruse, but those which are most apt and most striking. Pupils should be trained to pick out expressions which strike them as being suitable.

What we have said with regard to reading applies with even greater force to recitation, which in many schools means nothing more than learning so many lines "by heart." The following specimen questions on poems which are frequently found on the lists presented for Standards III. and V. will serve as an indication of the method in which the subject-matter of the poetry might be dealt with:—

- (a.) "The Child's First Grief": What was the child's first grief? Where did this child miss his brother most? Quote the lines which show this. What kind of a child was the one who died? What lines tell us this? To what flower is he compared? quote the line. Where had they played together? quote the lines, &c.
- (b.) "Burial of Sir John Moore": Who was Sir John Moore? Where was he killed? give the circumstances. Give the line which describes the night on which he was buried. Have you ever seen a night such as is described in the words "The struggling moonbeams' misty light"?

Give from another poem you have learned lines which describe the death of a soldier. The children may remember "He wrapped his colours round his breast, on a blood-red field of Spain," &c.

*Composition.*—This subject includes all the teaching which aims at giving a child ability to speak and write good, pure English. Ability to render orally a complete story is as much a test of the pupil's efficiency in composition as is his ability to give the same story on paper in the form of an essay. Too much is probably being made of the written essay, too little of the oral effort; and yet it is just as important that we should produce good speakers as good writers. Indeed, from the point of view of school-work, there will never be the best work in written essays until oral composition in some form or other has been allotted a prominent place in every standard. One of the following lessons should be of daily occurrence in the lower classes: (a) Conversational lesson on picture, (b) reproduction of the simple story, (c) original story on picture; and in the upper classes oral compositions should be given regularly. By an oral composition is meant not simply "the questioning-out of a particular subject," but the full expression of their ideas on that subject, from the beginning of it to the end, by the pupils of the class. Such lessons given regularly and consistently will tend largely to increase the pupils' stock of ideas as well as their powers of expression, and will go far to minimise the difficulty experienced by some teachers in obtaining full written essays. The books which are now to be used throughout the district—viz., "Nelson's Illustrated Compositions"—should prove very valuable, and we anticipate that if the lines laid down in them are consistently followed, a great improvement will be made in essay-writing in such schools as have hitherto failed to get good work in that department. On the formal aspect of composition we have little to say this year. In some schools it was evident that while the pupils had been taught to express themselves fully, their written essays had not been sufficiently supervised, and faulty constructions had been allowed to pass. The formal side of composition must have its due place; and although much of what has hitherto been taught under grammar may well be dispensed with, nevertheless all that is required to give a proper understanding of the sentence