ENGLISH, ETC.—Reading and Recitation, though still allowing room for improvement in the intelligent preparation of the subject-matter and in the development of a taste for literature, are usually well taught, the two Readers now in most common use being the Royal Crown and Imperial. It is a matter for regret that the Zealandia school paper, which evidently found favour with many, should have had so brief a career, as it helped to provide a variety of suitable matter and to prevent any distaste from arising through the perusal of over-conned selections. The Canterbury Inspectors suggest, as we have previously done, that for recitation the teachers should "go further afield in making selections from the best poetry available." This would naturally involve the labour of transcription, an exercise which is apt to be too much neglected, but which can be made very useful as a training in both writing and spelling. A programme for each standard, or a two-years programme for each of two successive classes combined, might be drawn up, so that no child could go through his school course without having committed to memory several of the choicest gems of English literature. In the selection of these the taste of the master would have scope, and his individuality would thus permanently impress the minds of his pupils.

Writing and dictation continue to be very satisfactory branches of English, the former showing to better advantage and the latter to rather worse than in 1904, and yet to no school have we assigned special credit for excellence of penmanship, while more receive such commendation for correct spelling than for any other subject. Word-building in conjunction with oral composition should be more systematically carried on, especially through the higher standards, and improvements in the copybooks to bring them up to date in regard to commercial forms are still needed. In the junior classes the ruling of slates should be uniform, and the writing of the teacher's copy should always exactly conform to the style of the copybook in use. The transcription presented to us should always be as prescribed in the syllabus, and contain those forms which are wanting in the copybook. We expect it to be the product of the child's latest and best effort.

Our general impression was that the exercises set for composition were better treated this year, and a close analysis of our figures for every class bears out this view, though it is only in Standard VI that a great advance has been made. The percentages give the proportion of schools in which satisfactory work was produced, the tests having been for the second time set by the Education Department: Standard VI, 72 per cent.; Standard V, 43 per cent.; Standard IV, 61 per cent.; and Standard III, 81 per cent. The figures in 1904 were—Standard VI, 43 per cent.; Standard V, 37 per cent.; Standard IV, 56 per cent.; and Standard III, 78 per cent. Standard V is still the weakest class, but it was not so much that the synthesis of sentences was faulty this time as that grammar, even only so far as it bears upon composition, has evidently been too much neglected, for the children seemed devoid of ideas upon questions that might be treated grammatically. The adverb, let alone the adverbial phrase, which was more often than not confused with the adverbial clause, was sometimes unknown. Nor was it merely the nomenclature that appalled, for when asked to pick out the words that stand for names, the names themselves were commonly given—that is, when any answers at all were attempted. Changing the expression of a paragraph from the present into the past time was also a frequent stumbling-block, and the force of prefixes was but little understood. We were, on the other hand, very pleased with the answers given to tests set by us for Standard II, which were much more searching than hitherto.

Oral composition should be universally practised, full oral answering being insisted upon in English lessons, and even more advantage would be gained by constantly using this method in history, geography, and more especially in nature-study, where the child in giving a description is forced to draw upon his own vocabulary.

NATURE-STUDY.—Though pleased with much that has been done under this head, such as the keeping of weather calendars, charts, and rain-gauges, recording thermometer and barometer readings, illustrating graphically the barometric variation, observation of plant-growth, of varieties of plants, insects, birds, and minerals, we have found the method and quality of the treatment almost as varied as the selections. Fortunately we have not met so many this year who are waiting for "books" before they begin, as even the slaves of routine are beginning to see that the children are to be encouraged to observe for themselves what is in the world immediately around them, and "lions, tigers, and elephants" are not washed up on the beach every day. Realistic teaching would, even if the unseen were dilated upon, prevent the descriptions of these creatures from playing leapfrog in the child's mind, so that we certainly do not expect to meet again—"The camel that lives in the sea, comes up to the top of the water to breathe, and has a pouch to carry its young ones in." We can sympathize with the teacher who finds such a wealth of interest in the neighbourhood that he hardly knows where to begin, but others are like the one who told us that there was nothing in her neighbourhood (a bush clearing). When we ventured to suggest the bush, we were met by the rejoinder, "Oh! There's nothing in the bush." One of her more enterprising pupils though, we found, had discovered Hymenophyllums, kidney ferns, and orchids, was familiar with the weka's eggs and chicks, with paradise ducks and flappers, though he had never found the ducks' nests, had even seen a kakapo and a kiwi, and could describe closely enough to enable us to judge that he had found the Prince of Wales feather, and not the common *Todea hymenophylloides*. Observation and description, even when applied to the most common objects, must be accurate to be of use as a foundation for future science-training. How often do we find girls and even small boys ignorant of the number of toes possessed by the barndoor fowl, while sometimes the child who can sit by the hour watching horses and cows feeding in the paddock can see no difference in the way in which they do it. The romancer, too, must be guarded against—for example, the little lad who described the tui as hanging on by one foot to the kowhai and putting nuts into its mouth with the other. The Denniston boy who told us, in his Third Standard essay, that goats ate apple-skins, potato-peelings, banana-skins, inside of jam-tins, and anything else they could pick up was evidently (under township limitations) a keen student of nature.

The training might well be more systematic. Many have undertaken this work on right lines, but the chief difficulty with the Inspector was to find out what had been done, and especially the method