

submitted by Standard VI pupils at the examination for certificates. We consider that when pupils reach Standard V they should have acquired such skill in the formation, spacing, and joining of letters as will enable them to cultivate successfully a free, running hand, based on the system taught through the medium of copybooks. Amongst the "Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers" published with English "Code," the following paragraph appears under the heading of "Writing": "In any lesson which is not in itself a lesson on handwriting, overlaborious attention to copybook neatness is out of place just as much as the use of the ruler. Teachers should insist on written exercise being done with the maximum degree of rapidity consistent with full legibility." This does not imply laxity of attention to uniformity of height and slope and to general neatness, but merely emphasizes our contention that towards the close of school life pupils should have acquired the rudiments of a formed hand and have reached the stage when the laboured copybook style of earlier years ceases to be a distinguishing characteristic.

SPELLING.—The remarks made under this heading in our report of last year demand the earnest consideration of many of our teachers. In the lower standards—indeed, throughout the classes—response to the tests applied, which below Standard VI were reading-books in use, was in general highly satisfactory, and furnished unmistakable evidence of careful, systematic, and successful teaching. The "unseen" test in Standard VI, however, brought forth results which in many cases showed considerable weakness. The passage selected for dictation should have been well within the reach of pupils sitting for the leaving certificate, and, so far as we could judge, presented no greater difficulty than many of the paragraphs appearing in the class reading-books. The failure to do justice to this test, we consider, may fairly be attributed to want of systematic teaching of spelling, through the medium of word-building, which appears not to have received the attention it deserves in the upper classes, where pupils are capable of profitably studying the spelling of words appearing in the fairly wide range of reading-matter supplied to all schools, and of going through a course of word-building suited to their stage of mental development. This should be done during the ordinary course of school routine—i.e., some such method of treatment should find expression in a scheme of instruction co-ordinating the English subjects in the higher classes.

COMPOSITION.—Much creditable work is being done in this subject, and, speaking generally, the levels of attainment gained is highly gratifying. There are still, however, a considerable number of schools where ability to find fitting garb for idea and thought leaves much to be desired, and indicates want of attention to principles which obviously must underlie successful teaching. And here we would again emphasize what has been said so often, that the basis of all instruction in this subject should be *oral*. To quote from a well-known authority: "No matter how advanced the composition may be, oral exercises should never be discontinued." The really good oral work which in many schools is begun in the preparatory classes is not always continued as pupils rise through the standards, with the result that the natural limitations inseparable from early mental growth become more pronounced. To obviate this we must lift the pupil out of his limited plane of mental activity, break down the barriers obscuring his range of available thought, and enable him to realize and understand some of the possibilities presented by the varied subjects arising for discussion in the class-room and elsewhere. This can be done only by training him to use his faculties of observation and reasoning, and find suitable verbal expression for the thoughts to which the use of these faculties give rise. In short, oral expression of thought should form part of every lesson in the school. By its means not only are the various subjects which comprise the syllabus unified and co-ordinated, but also the power of ready speech, written as well as oral, is encouraged and strengthened. We are inclined to think that too frequently the teaching of "English"—this term is now applied to what formerly was known as grammar and analysis—is unduly dissociated from composition, whereas every lesson in English should have a very real and marked bearing on composition, and should be given with a definite object—e.g., to illustrate or drive home some rule, to teach such grammatical terms as are deemed necessary, to clear away difficulties in the matter of joining statements, to enable pupils to acquire some knowledge of analysis; but all this should be so interwoven with composition as to form part of a general scheme having for its object the ability to think and speak, or think and write, clearly, readily, and with some variety and beauty of expression. We should like to see in all schools—it has already been done in many—a definite scheme in English and composition, setting forth with some fulness the work it is proposed to deal with from class to class, and showing an unbroken bond of co-ordination and unification from the preparatory department to Standard VI. We consider, moreover, that when selecting material for composition or English lessons a more liberal use of exercises written by pupils themselves might with advantage be made. A child is much more interested in his own product or in that of a classmate than he is in an extract from, to him, an unknown author. The interest thus aroused tends to promote attention, develop originality, and encourage the growth of that spirit of self-help which should form one of the goals of all teaching effort. The English test submitted by Standard VI candidates at the certificate examination in some cases pointed to a preparation—we cannot call it teaching—which appeared to be confined to working out the contents of English cards set in former years. As a preparation for examination this plan may be effective, but as an educative, progressive, and useful training in English with a view to extending the pupil's vocabulary, widening his mental outlook, and increasing his power of expression, it is wholly to be condemned.

ARITHMETIC.—We have but little to add under this heading to the remarks made in former years. In the larger schools number was well dealt with in the preparatory classes, teachers realizing the true objective of the training involved—viz., to enable pupils to think clearly and systematically about number, to understand as far as possible the reasons for the processes they employ, and to have some knowledge of the principles underlying the various steps. In the smaller schools the work was not so satisfactory, and in an appreciable number of cases was dis-