

teacher or by regular meetings of the staff, a weak intermediate class may disorganize the programme of the whole institution. The classes where satisfactory reasons are given in correction of errors are not very numerous; it is a part of the subject that needs more attention, and should be dealt with especially in correlation with the essay and with oral speech. The preposition and the conjunction are not specifically mentioned in the syllabus, but they are indirectly referred to among the links of sentences and phrases. Their distinctive functions should be known. The transposition of passages from direct to indirect form was often defective. Weak sentencing and punctuation were also not rare. It was noticeable, on the other hand, that there had been a vigorous grappling with the small error in the essay—that is to say, the small errors were less numerous; nevertheless, where corrections could be readily made a clear explanation based on function was not sufficiently common.

American novel reading is becoming more and more prevalent in New Zealand, and the result on the language is beginning to be visible in the frequent use of such Americanisms as "belong there," the use of "like" as a conjunction, and even such expressions as "where did you used to see these" (Major) may be found in otherwise good writers. Inasmuch as English is a living, growing, developing language, it will become a problem of the near future how far it may be permissible to accept contributions from the great Anglo-Saxon-Celtic-Latin-Negro race of the West—how far it may be wise to neglect these idioms if we wish to preserve in close relation to each other the great nations that use our speech. It does not seem sufficient to take the opinion of one set of grammarians on the matter; and, as, whether we like it or not, these idioms are becoming common among our people, the question arises as to the function of the grammarian: "Is it his to accept or reject what is commonly used by otherwise good writers—*e.g.*, "like" as a conjunction. Hitherto I have tried to eradicate this, but I find that teachers as well as pupils use the idiom.

The reading of young teachers should include an acquaintance with such writers as Lamb, Addison, Macaulay, Drummond, Ruskin, Chesterton, Keats, Longfellow, Tennyson, Scott, not to mention Milton and Shakespeare; these are all brilliant stylists in different fields. Or if a convenient volume is desired let them get the third "Temple Reader." Too many imagine they can learn taste and acquire good modes of expression by argument, instead of by frequent resort to the great masters. Let the young teacher go often to them and absorb their sublime harmonies. His soul, too, will become sonorous, and he will find the poet's word is true: their "echoes roll from soul to soul and grow for ever and for ever."

Essay-writing takes various forms: Picture description and interpretation, the prose rendering of the plots of poems, the reproduction of geographical and historical matter, imaginative or expressional work in connection with nature-study, the retelling of stories, narration in connection with current events, business and social letters, advertisement-writing, &c.

Some pupils when invited to write out a telegram or an advertisement from given details show a cheerful disregard for brevity. Letters of application are at times fictitious—*e.g.*, a child of thirteen will say he is eighteen, a child in Standard VI will say he has a Standard VI proficiency certificate. Why not state facts? The letter will seem more real.

In some schools the short essay tells its tale of hours given to receptivity rather than to production, where the teacher treats the pupils as persons to impress and not as people to co-operate. If the child's brain is brought into active work the ideas soon begin to spring readily, perception becomes keener, and thought struggles for expression. This is the time for studies in word-building or for direction of the pupil's attention to the works of literary artists; a natural rhetoric will then grow easily and suit itself very simply yet effectively to its subject.

On what does a teacher's choice of poetry for recitation depend?—all too rarely on some well-thought-out scheme. "Here are some extracts in the reading-book; they will do as well as others"—and so the same hackneyed programme is presented year after year. "Is this piece chosen on account of its literary characteristics?" "Is this a concise and vivid descriptive word-painting?" "Does the sound of battle roll through this?" "Is that one touched with the moral 'eros'?" "Does any of my pupils seem in temperament fitted to give a dramatic realization of this poem?" "Have I awakened yet to the fact that all New Zealand poetry is not doggerel, and that some of it is calculated to kindle and keep alight the vestal fires of patriotism?" These are some questions that the teacher may ask himself when choosing his poetry. It is well to preserve a good balance in teaching, using some subjects to humanize the pupils, refining their taste and enlightening their perception, and using others to cultivate those traits of accuracy and power that grow with scientific study. I was therefore pleased to find teachers making a closer study of the literary characteristics of poems. Under the influence of American ideals a wave of utilitarianism is sweeping over the schools, and tends to be felt, especially in Standards V and VI. This will probably be the keynote of the next ten years. It is not altogether disadvantageous, but it is for that reason the more necessary that our teachers should try to keep the balance even.

Sometimes a poem by one author—*e.g.*, the "Story of Horatius"—is presented as a year's programme in recitation. It would seem better to enable the children by means of shorter pieces to acquire some knowledge of different types of poetry.

ARITHMETIC.—In this subject, as in others, there are two aspects—the method and the result. In the lower school good methods should result in automatic accuracy, as well as in a sense of the value of the numbers used. When a child in the standards needs to use his fingers in counting it is obvious that the ground-work has not been efficient. If the method was good, then the industry or the intelligence with which it was applied was at fault. Occasional long-tot practice is useful in every class. Mental arithmetic, which is partly an exercise in power of abstraction and partly the easy presentment of some new rule, should not be overlooked, as it tends to be in small schools where standards are numerous. Mental sums should not be too hard; the problems