

prose is seldom recited as well as it would be read. In many schools a distinct improvement is noticeable in recitation, but as a rule teachers accept far too low a standard. Recitation does not mean mere memorizing; it is the oral expression of what has already been memorized. A fault too often present is deficient memorizing by both teacher and pupil. It is impossible for teachers to set and exact a high standard of oral expression in this subject unless they themselves are thoroughly familiar with the piece. It is also a poor example to set before the pupils. As the piece has already been memorized, it would not be unfair to demand a vitality and correctness of expression 50 per cent. in advance of that expected from the same class in reading a piece of the same difficulty. As matters now stand in many schools the recitation is no better—in many cases it is worse—than the reading. Teachers must realize that recitation and mere memorizing are not synonymous terms. Efficiently and generously taught, this subject, with its especial appeal to the ear, will react beneficially on reading and composition.

*Spelling.*—This should obviously be closely connected with word-building, and should be taught as part of the word-building scheme; but there are still a considerable number of teachers who continue to follow traditional methods, and require their pupils to commit to memory lists of words appearing at the beginning or end of reading-lessons. The result of the application of this method is frequently shown in inability to spell simple words correctly, and, after all, no amount of progress in the spelling of difficult words will compensate for weakness in the spelling of those simple words which form the groundwork of written and spoken language. Teachers are reminded that a definite word-building scheme is obligatory, and that, provided their schemes be comprehensive and suitable, the tests applied will be taken from these, together with dictation of sentences composed of words in everyday use.

*Composition.*—The work in this subject is on the whole similar to that done in previous years. In the best schools it is good, in the others it ranges from satisfactory to poor, and in a great many of these a marked improvement could be and ought to be brought about. It is not an uncommon experience to find but little progress made during the passage through the upper classes, pupils in Standard VI being unable to write exercises showing much advance on those submitted by Standard IV. In many cases pupils in Standard VI have a very imperfect idea of the meaning of "a paragraph," and do not appear to understand the necessity for or the way to set about expanding a subject and arranging its phases in some kind of natural and appropriate sequence. The value of oral composition is not yet definitely grasped by a large number of teachers, who fail to realize its possibilities. In this connection teachers will find E. H. Lewis's "A First Book in writing English" of considerable help.

*Writing.*—In a number of schools this subject is now being taught much more successfully than formerly in the preparatory department. Most teachers err in insisting upon accuracy first instead of upon facility of movement. Facility and, of course, rapidity of movement are the first essentials, and herein writing is akin to drawing. The pupils must first acquire such control of their muscles, such co-ordination between hand and eye, that they can execute with a rapidity many times as great as most now possess all the principal movements required in the writing of our alphabet. How lamentably far we are behind other countries, and with what pertinacity we cling to the snail-like methods by which our great grandmothers were taught, are illustrated by the fact that in Canadian and American schools even the youngest pupils write from one hundred and seventy to two hundred strokes a minute, while ours seldom make as many in half an hour. On leaving school Canadians write thirty-five to forty words per minute; ours from eight to twelve, and even these few, through lack of hand-control and hand-training, abound with irregularities of size and form. Wherever possible the slate should be eliminated. The slate-pencil is so thin that a good freedom-giving grip is impossible; it is also of such a nature that a comparatively heavy pressure must be applied before it makes an impression. Constant use of the slate-pencil thus trains the pupil in a method of manipulating the writing-instrument that produces pernicious effects, which are specially apparent when lead-pencil and pen are introduced. Rapid writing on free-arm drawing-boards has been attempted in the preparatory classes in some of the larger schools with most encouraging results. We are of opinion that the movement should be extended to the standard classes, up to, say, Standard III, and that its adoption would help in no small degree to enable pupils to acquire a free, running, legible style so greatly to be desired.

*Arithmetic.*—There is still a disinclination to spend much time on oral and mental work. Many teachers also are inclined to believe that accuracy will come only through a large amount of written work. Hence we find in too many places an unsoundness in the fundamentals of this subject; pupils do not know with absolute thoroughness their multiplication and division tables, nor can they add and subtract numbers with the desired facility. This is a blemish in the preparatory department; it is an absolute hindrance to sound progress in the upper school. The root of the evil lies, perhaps, in a disregard to the syllabus—in a not altogether blamable desire to achieve more than the syllabus asks. Thus, up to the end of the second school year, the syllabus demands a thorough knowledge of numbers up to twenty. Yet many teachers fritter away their time by teaching these pupils numbers as high as one hundred. The almost inevitable result is that the pupils cannot, rapidly and almost automatically, make calculations involving numbers not greater than twenty. Again: it is no uncommon sight to see Standard II set to work a long sum in compound addition or multiplication of money before they can give, without conscious calculation, the value of any number of farthings up to fifty, or of pence up to one hundred and fifty, or of shillings up to, say, two hundred and fifty. Were the pupils thoroughly drilled in this preliminary work, then probably for 50 per cent. of the pupils any exposition of method would be unnecessary, and at least double, or treble, the quantity of "written" work would afterwards be accomplished. In mental arithmetic generally far too much time is given for the solution of each problem, an indication either that the problem is too hard or that the pupil is but illgrounded in fundamentals. The evil arises partly also from the fact that problems of too many distinct kinds are taken during the one lesson. When the teacher gives only one problem (and that a fairly difficult one) of a certain type, and then passes to another of a quite different