

copybooks are not used, and writing is taught from headlines placed on the blackboard, these headlines should be written before the school opens for the day, and should be in strict conformity with the principles adopted. When this is not done, the copy, being necessarily somewhat hurriedly written on the blackboard, is almost invariably so inaccurate that, if the pupils were to copy it faithfully, as they are expected to do, the training would be worse than useless. If blank books are used for copybooks they should be used for this purpose only, and not, as frequently is the case, as exercise-books for all subjects. In too many schools we find that, though the special writing lesson is carefully taught and supervised, the teacher does not exercise sufficiently close and insistent supervision over the general clerical work. It is futile to expect pupils who are permitted to write carelessly throughout the greater part of the day to acquire the habit of good writing. Much more attention might be paid to the attitudes assumed by the children while writing, and pen drill should be taken more regularly.

COMPOSITION.—With regard to composition it is found that, comparatively speaking, the essays in the lower standards are of much higher merit than those of the upper standards. This want of progress is particularly marked after the children have passed into Standard IV. The method of treatment, or, rather, want of treatment, commonly adopted accounts for this. A subject is given to be written on. Without any preliminary instruction the pupil puts together a few sentences badly connected and loosely constructed. The teacher almost wholly confines his instruction to the correcting of the errors in spelling and grammar. How can a child be expected to improve under such a method? Composition should be dealt with in a broader and more comprehensive manner. The child should be taught the elementary principles underlying the construction of an essay. Among other things, such an essential and simple matter as the use of the paragraph should receive more attention. Again, instead of the usual stereotyped form of sentence so commonly used, the child should be trained to vary the style by occasionally introducing such rhetorical forms as the interrogative and exclamatory sentences. As has been pointed out on a previous occasion, a greater effort should be made to enlarge the child's vocabulary, and to cultivate in him the habit of using the most expressive words. Moreover, special lessons might be given to show the necessity of selecting suitable introductory adverbs and phrases of reference. It is very rarely that we have an opportunity of seeing a lesson in composition taught. Almost invariably, during our visit of inspection, if composition is down on the time-table for that day, the teacher simply asks the class to write a letter or essay, and, as far as we are concerned, that is the end of the matter. We seem almost fated to visit a school on the days when composition is not taught but practised. Moreover, the time-tables do not help us much. They should show whether composition is to be taught by the teacher or to be a written exercise done by the pupils, or, in other words, whether it is theory or practice.

CONVERSATION LESSONS.—Very few, if any, teachers in this district set apart a definite time for these lessons. On not a single time-table have we seen such lessons given at a stated time. These lessons should be given not for the sake of the actual information imparted, but for the sake of encouraging the pupil to talk freely. Let the teacher encourage him to get beyond the one-sentence stage of conversation. Get him to talk at length. Every effort must be made to break down that barrier of reticence between the teacher and the pupil.

HISTORY.—History, as gauged by our examinations, has proved most disappointing in those schools where it is treated solely as a reading lesson. As a rule, the simplest and most superficial questions on the subject-matter of the history reader soon find the child in deep water and far beyond his depth. This should not be so. Given a carefully graded and well-written series of history-books, and a teacher desirous of vitalising his teaching by the use of maps, pictures, and other auxiliaries, then the results should not be such as we unfortunately find them. When, in addition to the prescribed reader, the teacher makes a selection of ten or twelve subjects which he treats as special lessons, the children get a better and more intelligent grasp of what is taught, and their interest in things outside of their own life is quickened. There is, however, a tendency to limit the area of the selection too much. Subjects should be chosen that will arouse interest in various aspects of life. The attention of the pupil should not be confined to the achievement of the soldier and sailor alone. There are other heroes besides Napoleons and Nelsons. The wide field of invention and scientific progress has its heroes too. There have been Franklins, Faradays, and Kelvins, but the pupil knows little or nothing of these. There is the field of literature, with its Shakespeares and Miltons. The child, too, knows little of these. Widen the child's horizon in as many directions as possible, though the extension in any particular direction may not be great. Much better to do this than extend it in one or two directions only.

SPELLING AND DICTATION.—Judging from the results of our special tests, spelling and dictation are particularly well taught, but it is a question whether this comparatively high efficiency is not in a measure due to the fact that the time and energy devoted to these subjects are out of proportion to that devoted to others equally as important. As in the case of composition, we rarely see spelling taught. What we do see is a long list of disconnected words together with a passage from the reading-book given in the way of dictation, and then the errors marked and counted. The spelling for the day should be selected beforehand, and as a rule more forethought should be shown in the selection of the words. Some of our more methodical and painstaking teachers not only keep a spelling note-book for their own guidance, but also see that each pupil is provided with one. In addition to the words culled from the reading-book, it would be wise for teachers to draw up a list of technical, commercial, and scientific words in every-day use, which Standard VI should be required to learn. More advantage should be taken of the blackboard in grouping common errors, in illustrating certain rules, and in teaching other well-recognised means of securing correct spelling. The importance of derivation as a help to spelling does not generally receive that recognition it deserves.