

subject reaches a high standard and becomes a source of pleasure to the pupils. The theory that it is advisable and advantageous to allow the children to select their own pieces of poetry does not work out well in actual practice, and for the following reasons: (a) Pupils are usually incapable of selecting anything worth learning; (b) the poetry is poorly known and poorly comprehended; (c) the selection usually falls on a piece learned in a lower standard or in a school previously attended. In the largest schools, where there are highly qualified assistants in charge of each class, the head teacher in collaboration with his staff might well draw up a scheme for recitation, as for geography and history, in such a way that the pupils at the end of their school course might have some knowledge of the principal poets and prose writers of the language and of their chief works.

*Spelling.*—Spelling is a satisfactory subject in our schools, but it is a rare thing to hear spelling taught. Most teachers spend the time of the lesson in dictating words and marking the pupils' efforts. Though no doubt much of this work is necessary, it would be very helpful to the pupils if well-thought-out lessons on the construction and formation of common everyday words were given during at least part of the time now devoted to testing. It frequently happens, moreover, that where spelling is taken from a "spelling-book" the results are unsatisfactory. Probably the best results are obtained where pupils are continually urged to observe all the commonly used words they come across in one particular book—*e.g.*, the *School Journal*. The habit should be inculcated of not letting a single word escape attention. Care should be taken in lessons such as history, geography, and science that names of places, persons, institutions, substances, &c., are subjected to constant spelling revision. In short, whatever word is constantly used should be subject to frequent observation for spelling purposes.

*Writing.*—In a large majority of our schools the writing is of good quality. Where it fails to reach a satisfactory standard the cause is to be found in the fact that an insufficient number of formal lessons are given, especially to the junior and middle divisions. Even in different classes in the same school there is often a considerable lack of uniformity about the style of the writing, indicating that the subject is not receiving intelligent treatment at the hands of the head teacher. A good type of writing should be selected for the whole school, and uniformity should be insisted on in the classes up to and including Standard IV. Individuality might be allowed, but not encouraged, in Standards V and VI, provided that the writing remained good. A number of teachers, moreover, do not take sufficient care to see that every exercise involving writing is executed with equal neatness and grace. Print script has been introduced into quite a number of schools, and has, generally speaking, been a success. In the infant department its adoption has expedited the teaching of reading, writing, and spelling to a most pleasing degree; while in the higher classes, where adopted either wholly or partially—*e.g.*, in arithmetic and spelling—the general neatness of the work has increased considerably. When used for dictation and spelling exercises there is a distinct falling-off in errors. Where print script is adopted throughout the school the teacher must take the following precautions:—

- (a.) He must base his teaching on some definite system.
- (b.) A uniform type must be insisted on, the letters being as plain as possible and fancy strokes being forbidden. Print script containing a plentiful supply of flourishes is most difficult to read. In this connection some of the younger teachers set their pupils a very poor standard in the grotesquely printed characters they frequently place on the blackboard.
- (c.) The teacher must perfect his own style.
- (d.) He must teach the method with as constant a care as he would teach any other method of writing. Herein many teachers fail, for they seem to think that print writing requires no teaching.

Where print writing is not the style generally adopted in the school all teachers would, from the æsthetic point of view, do well to adopt it in part—*e.g.*, throughout written arithmetic, in the headings for most written work, and in all written work necessary in drawing-books. Thus there would be assured a little daily practice in artistic written expression.

*Composition and Grammar.*—Composition, perhaps the most difficult in the curriculum, continues to receive better treatment, and as a rule the exercises done by the pupils are increasingly creditable. The quality of the essays varies with the amount of reading done; where silent reading is adopted and a large number of supplementary readers are used the work is most commendable. In many of our best schools the old method of setting a subject to write about has given place to frequent study of extracts from the best writers, followed by original essays patterned upon them. During the past few years a number of helpful books on the teaching of composition have been published, notably Glover's "New English Books," and those teachers who have based their methods on these have met with marked success. Slang is creeping into the essays, particularly in the efforts of those pupils who frequently visit the picture-theatre. "Gee" is quite common, as is also the Americanism "so" not followed by "that." Our old friends "nice," "got," "lot," &c., still appear, though probably less frequently than of old. Punctuation is somewhat weak, the use of the comma being seldom understood by the children. Grammar still appears to be largely divorced from composition, and it cannot be said that it is well taught. Very little formal grammar is now looked for, but it is certainly reasonable to expect that pupils shall have a thorough knowledge of the functions of the single words, and of phrases and clauses, in the easy sentences which they meet with in their reading or write in their composition exercises. The direct bearing which grammar, as it should be studied, has on the structure of sentences is not duly appreciated by the majority of teachers. Oral composition is specially well taught in the primer department and satisfactorily in the junior divisions, but in Standards III to VI it is a weak feature in our schools. Indeed, oral expression is not keeping pace