

result of a few fragmentary exercises suggested by his class reader and the writing of an essay on "Winter;" that it is just as absurd to expect a boy to write a crisp and correct business letter without long preparatory training as it would be to expect him to work a difficult problem in percentage after ten months' study of arithmetic.

In recent years much thought has been given by educationists to the careful planning of school work in elementary English. Great effort has been made to have the work of each year follow naturally that of the preceding year, so that from his first school-day the child may have a consistent course of training in the use of English.

In beginning to outline the work in this subject the question which must be answered at the outset is: How much can be accomplished in this direction by the elementary school? Surely nothing so ambitious as the development of a literary style can be expected. The strictly intelligent use of our language, implying a knowledge of the origin and history of its words, force and beauty of style, so far as training can produce them, must be left to schools of advanced grades and to the universities.

However greatly we may differ in our opinions as to what may be justly expected of the elementary school in this subject it will be readily acknowledged that the net results of teaching, so far as individual pupils are concerned, will depend considerably upon the pupils themselves. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has said:—"When you wish to reform a man it is a good plan to begin with the grand-father." If the influence of heredity and environment has to be taken into account in relation to a man's moral nature, it certainly has to be dealt with in the training of his intellectual faculties.

It is well known that certain children are endowed by nature with good powers of expression; their organs of speech respond readily to thought and will. Others again, by no means intellectually dull, still seem to have great difficulty in giving verbal expression to their thoughts.

But while admitting differences of aptitude among pupils let us not unduly exaggerate them. We have to consider the average pupil in the average school.

What then can be done by the elementary school in the way of improving the English speaking pupil's power of using his own tongue?