

methods of teaching English Composition, and so, without apology for the egotism which must invade such a paper, I shall tell you of some of the methods which I have used and proved, with most of which no doubt you are already familiar.

Eternal vigilance for mistakes and drill in corrections, must be the work of every primary teacher, and should continue through all grades. A few minutes for a class in language should be found in both morning and afternoon time table until every child in school pronounces the g in *ing*, the th in *them*, says "he does not" or "he doesn't," if you prefer it, but not "he don't," and becomes familiar with correct past tenses and the forms of the verbs that are used with "have." In every class, in every question asked or answered by the child, the teacher should watch the construction of sentences and the use of words, as carefully as she watches the formation of letters in the writing class, and in the language class, she should drill in correct forms of speech. I found it was not wise to correct too often, at the time the children were telling their stories or answering their questions. Constant correction confuses ideas even of older people, and we want to encourage original thought. We do not wish to be like the teacher of whom her pupil said "I never see Miss Blank that I do not think of a comma." Keep a list of right forms of speech on the board before the eyes of the pupils and go over them two or three times a day. Keep the wrong forms out of sight and as much as possible out of hearing, and if necessary, call a child's attention privately, to his errors, and improvement will be rapid.

When the days for copying come, teach the rules for Capital letters as they occur, and in the copy, accuracy in punctuation is just as necessary as accuracy in spelling. I taught the rules for Capital letters, and for the period and interrogation points in grade one, and found they were more easily taught then, than later. The child naturally wonders why such things are there, do not be afraid to tell him.

"And what is a sentence?" asked a visitor to a small boy in my school, and when after a moment's hesitation the answer came, "a sentence is a bunch of words, with a capital letter on one end, and a little dot on the other," I was satisfied.

As the child grows, his ability to think and talk and write about things should be developed along with his increasing vocabulary of words. In "Education" last year, there was published an excellent article by Mr. Henry Lincoln Clapp, who vigorously defended the teaching of nature in the elementary schools. He quotes Professor Copeland of Howard, as follow: "Young men must not dream dreams or see visions or recall their childhood or their last summer's vacation. They are to open their eyes, and keep them open to scenes and

events near at hand." "This," says Mr. Clapp, "must be started in the elementary schools," and he goes on to say what many of us have proved, that the very easiest way to start and carry on systematic work in English composition is by means of describing the appearance and properties of common and simple natural objects. And again he quotes from President David Starr Jordan, "If they do not learn to observe in their youth, they will never learn, and the horizon of their lives will always be narrower and darker than it should have been."

When the age of silent reading comes, Composition work becomes easy. By this time, a child has a fair vocabulary, both in speaking and writing, and if something real is put before him, he will discuss it. I cannot put too strongly before you the value of oral composition in every grade. After all, the number of speakers in the world is far greater than the number of writers. Let us encourage the thinking and the speaking, and the writing will follow.

A child naturally thinks. Watch him in his games and see how vigorously he thinks and acts. He only wants a listener to tell how the game is played. I got more information concerning the different badges of the soldiers, who were in the same car with me, from a boy of ten who was my travelling companion, than I ever got from a book, and last summer I got pleasure myself, and gave a small boy pleasure by letting him show me his work from the Manual Training department and tell me how it was made.

Sometimes I let the children write the stories of their games, and illustrate them with the motion pictures that are in their drawing books. Anything that is a little different, interests. Try making a drama of the History lesson some day. Any slight change of dress makes the costume, a feather marks the Prince and a paste-board sword the soldier—and the child's imagination carries him the rest of the way. Let them act the drama first, then let them write it, and you have accomplished two things, the lesson will never be forgotten, and the composition will be the best the child can do. I kept Friday afternoon especially for work of this kind, and I believe the children learned more on that day than on any day during the week. A game, such as the Minister's Cat gives good exercise in thinking of descriptive words, and competition in writing the greatest number of correct sentences, about things suggested by some word such as "black" always creates interest. It is good exercise for older pupils to correct the work of the younger. It makes them more careful in their own work and develops responsibility. They also get a taste of that pleasure which should be more encouraged, the giving help to others.

It is wise sometimes to put common phrases on the board, and see if the children really understand the