

classes renders this difficult in the larger schools ; but in the ordinary school of from 30 to 40, I think it should be made the means of teaching, to no small extent, our very interesting but intricate language.

In considering this, allow me to divide my subject under the following heads :

I. *Dictation is useful as a means of teaching spelling.* In the preface to teachers of Parts 1 and 2 of the First Reader, and also in the Second Book, the Education Department advocates strongly, teaching the younger pupils to spell correctly by making them write *the words to be spelt on their slates*. This system is admirable, and for the following reasons, viz: It teaches them to spell by the *eye*, and not by the *ear* ; and it also has this advantage, that each pupil spells the word independently of the others. This causes the pupil to think and not to guess, as would be the case if a word were spelt wrongly by one and passed to another. Dictation eminently carries out this idea.

II. *As a means of teaching the synthesis of sentences.* Though the class may not be far advanced in grammar ; though, in fact, they may know nothing about it, yet constantly seeing sentences correctly written and synthetically arranged, cannot but have a beneficial effect apparent to all. It seems to me, that not only would dictation tend to this end, but it *does* almost everything. In teaching grammar this very mode is adopted, and success here as well as in other subjects consists in presenting the subject to the mind of the pupil in as many different ways as possible.

III. *Punctuation.* Correct punctuation is a difficult thing to teach. The mind of the beginner does not

easily distinguish the nice differences between the comma, semi-colon, colon, &c. And it is only after long practice that a thorough knowledge of this important part can be obtained. There can surely be no need for proof of this. It is only too apparent in the everyday work of the pupil. Dictation supplies this need (i. e. of practice) fully.

IV. *Writing.* It is a lesson in writing, having a beneficial effect which copy writing has not. The object in teaching writing is to obtain celerity and neatness combined ; and while the copy-book is used to teach the proper foundation of letters and the adoption of a particular style, dictation teaches the application of what has been learned from the copy-book.

Other and minor advantages will at once appear to the intelligent teacher. These appear to be the chief ones and I hope they are not unworthy of consideration.

There are more ways than one of giving dictation. For instance, some teachers allow preparation of the passage beforehand. I believe the better way is to dictate a short paragraph of some lesson in the Reader previously studied by the class. If this be done it will serve as a sort of review of the lesson, and the passage dictated is impressed on the mind of the pupil merely by writing.

I think where in any way it can be managed, dictation ought to be given every day. Half an hour is sufficient, and I am convinced that if this plan be adopted, much greater good than has yet been obtained will be accomplished in our schools, teaching the pupil to be careful, quick, neat and exact.

Yours, &c.,

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