

COMPOSITION WRITING.

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PRACTICAL GUIDE,

CONTAINING

MODEL LESSONS AND HINTS

TO

TEACHERS AND PUPILS.

36

BY

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CHICAGO:
GEO. & C. W. SHERWOOD.
1864.

STEWART PREFACE.

THE object of this little treatise is to supply a want long felt by the author in his own experience: some plan by which the exercise of composition might be presented to beginners in a more interesting and varied manner. What the pupil needs at the outset is not First Lessons of Rhetoric, Personification and Hyperbole reduced to the juvenile comprehension, but such patterns and hints as will lead him to acquire the facility of writing without knowing it. These nursery compends of formal rules gathered from larger works, may, like infantile Logics, be ingenious in design, but are scarcely practical in effect.

The methods here presented are the result of eight years' preparation for classes, and have all sustained the trial of successful test in the school-room.

Much care has been used in the selection of subjects pertaining to each section; not one is intended to be above the capacity of pupils in the district school.

The specimens of journals, and other literary efforts which are given, are not designed as models of those departments of literature, but simply as forms best adapted to express the end in view.

As will be seen, the plan set forth in the following pages is not intended to supersede the use of the text-book when the student is prepared for it, or to obviate the necessity of the teacher's acquaintance with the principles of Rhetoric; it merely aims to lighten and diversify the drill of composition in its earlier stages; and as such, is hopefully commended to the favor of the fraternity.

W. W. D.

Dixon, May, 1864.

PRactical GUIDE

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864,

By GEO. & C. W. SHERWOOD,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Northern District of Illinois.

28331

TEACHERS AND PUPILS

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COMPOSITION WRITING.

SECTION I.

THE exercise of Composition may begin as soon as the child can talk ; for composition is simply the expression of ideas in language, spoken as well as written. Hence, the child at home is unconsciously taking its first lessons in the art as its innocent prattle gladdens the heart of the mother from morn till night. As our purpose, however, regards the child at school, we begin with it there.

SECTION II.

FIRST LESSON.

Your little class are learning the alphabet, either by the old way of letter by letter, or by the word method. They can spell dog, cat, and like poetic terms that occur in the primer or on the cards. You encourage them to tell what they know about these things by various questions, as, Have you a cat? What color? What does she do? Do you like cats? As fast as each question is answered, print or write it on the board before them. Here is the result: I have a cat. My cat is gray. She catches mice. She eats meat. I like cats. Require this to be copied on the board, or on their slates. If they can not print or write, let them begin to learn at once. They will soon be able to write these answers at their seats, from recollection, without your putting them first on the board ; sometimes adding new facts of their own.

SECTION III.

A CONVERSATION.

The pupil thus passes into the First and Second Readers, the mind is expanding, and these familiar conversations may be made longer and more comprehensive. If the chapter in the Reader presents no topic that will furnish entertainment, give an easy object-lesson; or, if you distrust your ability in this respect, select a suitable subject and engage the class in a pleasant chat about it. The following from Barnard's *Journal* will illustrate the method:

LESSON ON A PENNY.

What is this? A penny. What is it made of? Copper. What color is it? A reddish brown. Tell me its shape. Round or circular. Have you seen any thing else circular? A ring. Is a penny like a ring? Why not? A ring has the middle part cut away; a penny is solid. Tell me what sound you hear when I strike the penny. A ringing sound. You all know the use of a penny. Did you ever think why people are so ready to give their goods for money? Because they can spend the money again. Yes, but what makes a penny of any value? Because it is made of copper. You are quite right; copper is very valuable, and also very useful; it serves to cover the bottoms of ships, to make kettles and saucepans, and many other things. It is made into wire, and also, when mixed with zinc, forms brass. Much is to be done before the copper to make a penny is to be had. First, men have to search out the veins of ore in the rocks, and then dig mines down to them, rend the hard rock with gunpowder, break it with hammers, pick out the bits of ore, which has then to be melted and made pure. When much money has to be paid, we do not use copper, but silver or gold. There was a clever painter who lived in Italy a long time ago. He spent much time in painting a picture, and when he went to receive the

money for it, he was paid in copper coin. The weight, over a long, hot road, so injured his health as to cause his death.

During these conversations, insist on perfect attention. When you have finished, tell them that you wish as much of what has been said as they can remember, to be written on their slates. When the class come up to spell, let the slates be brought along, and after the spelling process is over, have some, or all, read what they have written. Ask for the spelling of words in whose orthography you are suspicious of mistake.

After a conversation on *clouds*, the following abstract was reported by one of the class:

Clouds are made of vapor, which rises from the ocean and wet ground. They send us rain and snow. On clear days they are a great distance from the earth. Their color is white, blue, or black; at sunset they are red. Sometimes the clouds look like mountains of snow. In the daytime, when it is stormy, the clouds cover the sun from our sight, and at night, the moon and stars. The clouds often touch the earth.

You may now ask them to put their names below the writing at the right, and the date at the left, showing what you mean on the board, thus:

HANNAH MORE.

BARLEYWOOD, May 6, 1864.

The ensuing list, selected from Barnard, contains good subjects for familiar conversations. If your knowledge in regard to the topic proposed is not as full as desirable, make some preparation before coming to the class.

India-Rubber.	Water.	Coal.
Sponge.	Paper.	Rice.
Glass.	Sugar.	Tea.
Iron.	Salt.	Coffee.
Wood.	Gold.	Money.
Egg.	Watch.	Elephant.
Rose.	Honey.	Bread.

SECTION IV.

CORRECTION ON SLATES.

By this time, frequent practice will have given the boys and girls a readiness in writing manually and mentally, in their simple way. Do not burden with directions as yet. Teach little more than the common use of periods and capitals. These will soon be understood by your explanations on the blackboard and correction of their writing on the slates. An easy and rapid way of pointing out mistakes is as follows: as they all have their slates before them in class, pass around with a slate-pencil in your hand, and taking each slate in succession, cross out, amend, or give a hint, as may be necessary; in this way a class of fifty can be canvassed in little time. For the sake of variety and animation, the teacher may occasionally omit passing around, and call the attention of the pupils to the board, where such faults as are found to be prevalent may be humorously analyzed. Indeed, in conducting all the elementary stages of composition, encourage a joyous flow of spirits; cheerful associations will thus tend to make the operation one of pleasure and profit in school and in life.

SECTION V.

A CATALOGUE OF USES.

Sometimes in the reading lesson will occur names of things so fertile in uses that almost every pupil in an ordinary class can state some fact about them. These composition conversations, as they may be called, may be introduced in the midst of the reading, whenever a suggestive word arises; but it is probably better to finish the lesson proper, and then all the remaining time of the recitation will be at your disposal for a social discussion.

The word *rivers* occurs. "Well, what are rivers good for?" Eyes sparkle and hands rise along the entire class. You begin at one end, and let each "say his say." No. 1. "Rivers are

good for fish." No. 2. "To skate on." 3. "Steamboats to sail on." 4. "To wash with." 5. "Men to swim in." 6. "To turn mill-wheels." 7. "To water the land." 8. "Cows to drink." 9. "Sprinkle streets." 10. "Float logs." 11. "Ice to make ice cream." 12. "Ducks to swim in."

Childish ingenuity will tax itself to the utmost to swell the list, but will often omit some important truth which the teacher's profounder mind will supply. In the present case, not one of the little naturalists noticed the river as an element of beauty in the landscape; hence it becomes necessary to explain how God has made the world to gratify our eyes as well as to minister to the comfort of our bodies.

In the meantime the teacher has been putting each use on the board as fast as named, so that in conclusion the utilitarian catalogue of the stream stands complete before them:

USES OF RIVERS.

1. Catch fish.
2. Skate on.
3. Steamboats to sail on.
4. Wash with.
5. Swim in.
6. Turn wheels.
7. Water land.
8. Cows to drink.
9. Sprinkle streets.
10. Float logs.
11. Ice to make ice cream.
12. Ducks to swim in.
13. Make the country look pretty.

You may now read these off slowly in order, and then rub out, asking the class to bring as many of these items on their slates as they can remember, and also to put them together in better sentences. Do not allow a scholar to answer more than one use, as much of the enthusiasm is destroyed if some genius

monopolizes the replies; the rest, thus anticipated, will show no anxiety in waiting their turn, and become mere spectators, not actors in the game.

SECTION VI.

A STORY.

We speak of the reading recitation as the time for these preliminary "rehearsals," because our composition exercises have thus far been drawn from that lesson, and because if this opportunity be taken, the class need not be assembled for the express purpose.

To-day indulge thy good-natured disciples with a story,—not from the Arabian Nights, nor improvised from your own imagination,—but some of those pleasing incidents of history, which charm old and young. Here is a specimen of what we mean:

When a king of Goths was buried in Italy, his followers turned the course of a river, where it was most rapid; and having dug a very deep grave in this river's bed, there interred their revered prince, with many rich suits of armor, and much gold and precious stones. They then turned the river back into its usual course, and killed on the spot all that had assisted at this work, that the place of his interment might never be discovered.

Many pleasing episodes of similar interest can be gleaned from history and the poets:

Damon and Pythias.	Sergt. Jasper at Fort Moultrie.
Coriolanus.	Lafayette.
Wolfe's Death Scene.	First Crusade.
Leonidas at Thermopylae.	Napoleon at Moscow.
William Tell.	Major Andre.
Byron's Mazeppa.	Androcles and Lion.
Chillon and its Inmates.	Loss of Royal George.
Sir Philip Sydney.	Venice and Bridge of Sighs.
Franklin's first appearance in Philadelphia.	Man of the Iron Mask.

If your story-telling vein is not as happy as that of an Italian troubadour, look over your books for some volume containing sketches, in character and description adapted to the class, and read to them.

These narratives, whether told or read, are to be reported by the pupils on the slate, after suitable time for preparation. The substance simply, not the exact words, is all that is required. Be careful to select such stories as are short and pointed. A long account, with dates and personages and events, even though entertaining during its recital, will leave such a confused impression on the mind of the pupil, as to embarrass in making out his report.

SECTION VII.

USING THE BLACKBOARD.

Your class, let us now imagine, are beginning Primary Grammar. Every week they have had frequent practice in one or other of the previous forms, until they have become quite ready in the preparation of slate reports. If penmanship has advanced uniformly with other branches, a legible hand may now be written, although this is not essential. They are ready at this stage to develop a subject into a composition without so much preparatory suggestion.

It may happen however, that you are called to a new situation; for teachers, like the Wandering Jew, rarely have "a local habitation." Here you find large boys and girls, who have seldom or never written a line. As their minds are somewhat mature, a slight practice on some of the foregoing forms will soon qualify them, also, to unfold some easy topic proposed. But whichever kind of pupils it may be, *show them the composition in its various processes of formation on the board.* Let them see *how* it is done, and they will readily discover that there is no mystery or difficulty in the matter.

Some superficial thinkers, possibly, may condemn this method as making composition-writing a process of imitation. So it is,

and so it must be. The thought may be original, the form must be borrowed. The history of literature is, to a great extent, a history of imitation. Virgil copies after Homer, and Milton exhibits the beauties of both in his *Paradise Lost*. Boccace's *Decameron* was the model for many of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Waller owned that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the *Godfrey of Bulloigne*. Pope attained his melody of verse by the study of Dryden and the classics. The style of many writers is often insensibly moulded by that of some favorite author. Aristotle's logic of language is quoted as authority after two thousand years. Hence, although we may think for ourselves, the forms of presenting our thoughts must be in accordance with those established by the experience of genius. Is it not better to give the pupil models at each successive step, so that he may speedily gain an insight into correct methods, rather than to let him hit upon them himself after numberless mistakes and discouragements?

Much of the prejudice of teacher and pupil against composition in some schools arises from the dry, formal manner in which it is conducted. Their other lessons are pursued in textbooks where every new principle is clearly illustrated by example and explanation. Whereas, in essay writing, all these aids are expected to be supplied by intuition. Teachers there are, who begin their first lessons in this department by requiring a composition of a certain length by a certain day. Youthful nerves vibrate in suspense; and what judicious management at the outstart might have rendered a labor of love, becomes a task of terror.

SECTION VIII.

COMPOSITION ON BLACKBOARD.

You stand by the board, chalk in hand. This is the small Grammar class, for as Grammar and Rhetoric are closely related, this subject is now brought up at this recitation. "Class, we will not have our regular lesson to-day, but will write a

composition together on the blackboard. *Apples* is the subject, and I put it here at the top. Those who have any thing to say may raise their hands." Forearms at once assume the perpendicular. You call upon them at discretion. *Emmet*. "Apples are very useful." *Teacher*. "Yes, but that is not the best thing to mention first; besides, beginners are apt to have that word so much, that people get tired of it." *Lorenzo*. "Apples are nice." *T*. "Nice what? Machine?" *L*. "No; nice fruit." *T*. "Then we have our first sentence, which I will write under the subject. Who next?" *Anna*. "We cook with apples, and—" *T*. "Wait, Anna, we are not quite ready for yours. Where do they grow?" *Charles*. "Apples grow on trees." *T*. "Yes, but as we have apples in the other sentence, we will not put it in this, but say, *They* grow on trees. Well, Milton?" *Milton*. "There are Bell-Flower apples, Romanite apples, Pippin apples, and—" (here the boy enumerates all our native and foreign varieties.) *T*. "Very well; before you state the different ones you might say, 'There are several kinds, as,'—and then bring them in. It does not sound well to repeat *apples* after each one; so we will leave that out. Now, Michael, do apples all get ripe at the same time?" *Michael*. "No; some get ripe in the summer, and some late in the fall and are not soft till winter; people pick them off the trees, and put them in the cellar." *T*. "Now, Anna, we will hear you." *Anna*. "We cook with apples, and eat them raw, and make pies, apple-dumplings, and other things." *T*. "You may first say, 'They have many uses;' and afterwards mention them, as pies, apple-dumplings, sauce, pickles, jelly, eating between meals, baking, and drying for winter." *Orrilla*. "Some men have large orchards, and send hundreds of bushels to market." *T*. "Now let us see how our composition reads:

APPLES.

Apples are a nice fruit. They grow on trees. There are several kinds, as Bell-Flower, Romanite, Pippin, Genitan, &c.

Some get ripe in the summer, and some late in the fall and are not soft till winter. People pick them off the trees, and put them in the cellar. They have many uses: pies, apple-dumplings, sauce, pickles, jelly, eating between meals, baking, and drying for winter. Some men have large orchards, and send hundreds of bushels to market.

• JOHN MANDEVILLE.

STERLING, March 9, 1864.

"You all have some idea now of putting together a composition like this. You will find no trouble, I think, in making one yourselves; especially since the subject I am about to give will be of the same kind as we have had to-day. You are to write about some variety of fruit; and lest several should get the same kind, I will tell each what to take: Lorenzo, peaches; Charles, plums; Milton, watermelons; Michael, grapes; Anna, strawberries; Orrilla, pears." If they seem anxious to choose any fruit they prefer, let them do so, as the distribution of the various sorts among them was merely for the sake of variety. "This is Monday, and on next Monday I wish your compositions to be ready. Remember to place the subject in the center of the top line, the town, month and year on left side below, and your name on right. Use foolscap, as that is cheap and convenient as any, and fold thus in the manner of a bill. After it is folded, write the subject and your name across one end."

SECTION IX.

TIME TO PREPARE.

It is best to give beginners, and indeed scholars of experience, a week for the task; in this way, besides chance intervals from their studies, Friday night and Saturday will be at their disposal for entire devotion to the performance.

SECTION X.

CORRECTING.

When these first efforts are timidly presented on the ensuing Monday, you will probably look them over with a view to some correction. Do not imagine, however, that you are revising for publication the literary remains of some departed friend. Simply call attention to bad spelling and such obvious errors as are easily understood. If this be done in no censorious spirit, but in a familiar manner, it will be kindly received and remembered in future attempts. Make your criticisms more searching as the pupil advances.

SECTION XI.

PRESERVING COMPOSITIONS.

With the first composition written, begin to impress the propriety of preserving every one, good or bad. Beginners will often express contempt for their first efforts, because poorly done. Explain to them the benefits of such preservation: the satisfaction of tracing their gradual improvement as shown in a long succession of trials; and the pleasure of reviewing in after life the manuscripts of youthful days. For the purpose of preservation, it is not needful that they be transcribed into a book, as this is laborious; they may be kept in packages, as merchants do their bills. It is convenient to have those of each year in a separate package.

SECTION XII.

PUNCTUATION.

Punctuation may now begin to receive more attention. As little space is devoted to this feature in Grammars and Readers, and as much practice, at any rate, is the quickest way of acquiring skill, have your class employ the Reader for this purpose. Let a verse be written every day on the slate, before coming to the class, and carefully studied with a view to the proper location of capitals and the various points; after the

lesson has been read, have them go to the board, write and punctuate the same verse, from your dictation. The pupils then change places, and as the teacher reads the verse, naming the points in order, the corrections are made.

SECTION XIII.

TEACHER WRITES ON THE BOARD.

It is another Monday, and the small Grammar class have come to recite. "I will not hear the lesson to-day, but instead will write a composition myself on the board; after I am through, you can have the privilege of correcting the mistakes." The proposition strikes them as exceedingly novel, but their astonished eyes soon read the following:

SHUMAKER.

the shumaker is a useful traid if their were no shumakers people wood have to do without butes and shus when you go to get a but maid the shumaker takes a string and mezures your foot; Then the shumaker cuts them out in the lether and sos the peaces together and then hamers on the soul. shumakers use a low bensch to sit on and an all to make the wholes and a lether apern to put on to keep off the dirt, Thay so with wacksends. thay use caskin shepskin and other kinds of lether two numerous to mention, This is all I will say at presant

It will be at once observed that I assume, for the time being, the character of an utter ignoramus; transferring myself as far as possible into the supposed mental status of a primitive genius in Orthography, Punctuation, and Rhetoric. "Now, scholars, those who notice errors may raise their hands, and I will give you liberty of going one by one and correcting them." It is needless to say that impatient hands rise with eager rapidity. Nancy has the first chance. She observes that the subject should begin with a capital T; *traid* is spelled wrong; so is *butes*, *shus*, *lether*, and *thay*; there should be a period at the end after *presant*. But Nancy begins to hesitate; and, as it is a

rule to take the seat whenever no further amendments are suggested at a glance, James has the floor. James says, *peace*, *soul*, *maid*, and *whole* are wrong. I rally to their defense. James admits there are such words, but denies their propriety in the present connection, to which conclusion I finally agree. Josey has been almost boiling over for his turn. *Wacksends* isn't right; neither is *bensch*, *apern*, *caskin*, and *shepskin*; there should be a period after *dirt*; *then* shouldn't begin with a capital.

And so on to the end of the chapter. This revision is continued until the critical acumen of the class discovers no further objections. It then, of course, remains for the teacher to direct their attention to any inaccuracies which have escaped them, as well as to caution against those they are likely to commit.

"Well, on next Monday you will all hand in a composition about some trade; any trade you please."

Rightly managed, few recitations can excel this in enthusiasm. While the teacher is writing the performance on the board, inquisitive mouths and eyes follow every word, hardly able to restrain the anxiety to tear it in pieces; and when the opportunity is at last given, what a boisterous delight they take in exposing every defect!

SECTION XIV.

TEACHER WRITES AGAIN.

Another plan. "Scholars, to-day I will write a composition on Canal Boats. Before I begin, I will make a list of the different things to be said about them. Here I will put them on one side of the board in order one under the other. For instance, we have—

1. What made of.
2. Shape.
3. How made to go.
4. Speed.
5. Uses.
6. Danger.

By thus forming a skeleton, as it is called, of the different ideas, you will know exactly what to speak about, and avoid getting the same thing twice." You may then execute the following on

CANAL BOATS.

Canal-boats are made of wood and iron. They are shaped much like a steamboat, except that they have no wheels and pipes. Horses or mules pull them along by means of a rope fastened to the bow of the vessel. They sail in what are called canals, which are long ditches filled with water. Their greatest speed is about as fast as a horse can trot. Before railroads were made, people traveled on canals; but now they are chiefly used for carrying freight. Many people still like to go on them, because there is no danger of their bursting the boiler or running off the track.

MICHAEL MONTAIGNE.

Dixon, May 7, 1864.

The teacher should not perform this specimen effort without stopping several times, but should pause at such points as may afford favorable texts to hinge short lectures on. For instance: after inditing the first sentence above, you stand in that thoughtful, hesitating attitude so common to careful preparation. The pupils stare. Is it possible that the master's nonplussed? But here's a fine chance to point a moral: "I know well enough what to say, but I was just thinking of the best language in which to say it. I wish you would be particular not to write the first words that come into your minds, but study out the best. Many of the greatest writers that ever lived, composed very slowly; so I don't wish you to get out of heart if you must stop and think when you are writing."

In a similar manner, if you find yourself about to employ a word already used too often, turn to the class, mention the dilemma, caution against a like impropriety, and appeal to their knowledge of synonyms for a substitute in the present case.

"Well, for the next time our subject shall be some way of traveling. Let us see,—how many different kinds can we get?" Juvenile brains are soon busy; and as divers methods of locomotion are mentioned, you transfer them to the board. Here they are: Horseback, stage, cars, omnibus, balloon, steamboat, ship, carriage, walking. The pupils select whichever they prefer. "Now be sure to first make a skeleton of your ideas, and then write carefully and neatly."

It may be seen from the above, that it is convenient for the teacher in writing his model on the board to take for his theme one of a kind, so that the class may take its relatives, which they can easily subject to a similar treatment. To speak botanically, if one member of a *genus* be taken by the teacher, the remaining *species* will serve for the pupils.

SECTION XV.

HINTS.

Here it may be mentioned that in presenting every new method to the class, the blackboard should be the great medium. It has two advantages: your meaning is more rapidly and accurately conveyed; and a life and vividness are infused into the exercise, not to be reached by dull explanation.

Again: composition, like other branches, can be taught more satisfactorily by classes. Even where the instruction is oral, younger pupils demand a drill unsuited to the older. With those pupils studying Grammar, for instance, let each Grammar class form a separate division in composition. On this plan, the subject of composition may be brought up at the Grammar recitation, and your instructions more nicely adapted to the different grades.

SECTION XVI.

CORRECTING MANUSCRIPTS.

Teachers often do not see the composition previous to its being read by the pupil; but taking it as soon as read, proceed

to make whatever corrections are suggested at the moment. This plan is injudicious for both teacher and pupil: the former may make alterations, in haste, which cooler judgment will not sanction; while the latter grows indignant at black outrages on his fair manuscript. Other teachers, again, receive the composition from the pupil after it has been read, correct at home, and then return *privately* to the pupil, with all emendations carefully indicated. This is good as far as it goes, but gives the pupil the benefit merely of his own errors, and not those of his brethren.

It is better to have the efforts handed in a day or two before they are to be read, so that at your leisure you may weigh all the doubtful passages, and have no labor left for the time of reading but the statement of your criticisms on each effort in the presence of the class. Before you do this, however, call on the class for any errors noticed. They may observe inaccuracies not detected by yourself; while an habitual appeal to their opinions will encourage attention and improve their taste. The patients themselves, whose performances are under dissection, are often ingenuous enough to acknowledge mistakes committed during the writing.

When the errors are numerous, it is sometimes beneficial to have the effort re-written. When they are few and unimportant, especially in the case of attentive students, this requisition is unnecessary. In correcting compositions that are to be amended by the pupil, it is better for the teacher to indicate the faults rather than to point them out directly. Northend gives a good method: "Let it be understood that (1) placed opposite a line, denotes an error in spelling; (2), an error in use of capital, or neglect of same; (3), the omission of a word, or a repetition; (4), false syntax; (5), a wrong word." Thus the pupil sees at a glance the number and kind of mistakes committed, but is at the same time subjected to the process of discovering where they are.

Sometimes, among older pupils of nice discrimination, two

may be appointed from the class, to criticise the productions of the others. Let them have the pieces a day before they are to be read, in order to make the examination carefully. By this method, after the reading of each composition by the pupil to whom it belongs, the student-critics make their comments, and then give to the teacher for final revision.

SECTION XVII.

SUBJECTS.

By some such simple methods as those already presented, as well as various others that may be provided by the ingenious teacher, your class are beginning to have some confidence in their ability to compose,—able to discuss a suitable subject without much previous analysis or suggestion by the teacher. What kind of subjects shall be given them?

SECTION XVIII.

SUBJECTS.

The selection of subjects is an important feature in this exercise. Shall the pupil choose for himself, or shall the teacher choose for him? There are four objections to the choice of topics by the pupil: First, plagiarism becomes easy; scholars of lazy habits and obtuse consciences soon discover that books at home contain pieces decidedly superior in literary merit to any they can produce, and also that said pieces, with suitable alterations to befit their capacity, may be transferred to foolscap, and look in their own handwriting like domestic manufacture. Second, a distaste is often thus acquired, that is never forgotten. They sit down by the table and prepare to write; as a dozen different things pass in review, and each is summarily dismissed before it is properly pondered, despair soon stares them in face. Third, the same subject may be used indefinitely; let some enterprising girl read a performance that creates a furor and seems easy of imitation, and probably the next composition-day may witness several duplicates or approximations,—if,

indeed, the theme in some shape be not engrafted on the programme for the term. Fourth, familiar texts become too familiar. Certain topics and certain sentences have become household words to every teacher. Is the boy discussing the *Pig*? "Useful animal," is the opening burst of eloquence. Are the girl's meditations on *Spring*? "Delightful season of the year," is sure to be the first exclamation of fancy.

Now, these evils may be avoided on the one hand, and many advantages secured on the other, by the selection of subjects by the teacher. What is the end of composition-writing? Chiefly, the awakening of thought and the improvement of style. How is this consummation to be reached by common-place remarks about the domestic animals, the seasons, and all those old songs the school-boy world knows by heart? Are elementary pupils allowed to take optional branches? Has not educational experience rather prescribed a particular succession of studies? Is not the teacher, in most cases, a better judge of the pupil's capacity, than the pupil himself?

Our remarks bear, of course, entirely on learners; more advanced students, of taste and research, may properly be left to the exercise of their judgment.

In what manner shall the teacher assign the themes?

Adapt the subject to the mental power of the pupil. Suppose, however, in a humorous mood, you distribute the following list to your class: Lydia, you may take Freedom; Jarvis, Virtue; George, Truth; Nancy, Hope. Woe-begone faces will at once picture forth the anguish of terror-stricken hearts. Let their themes be drawn from what they have seen and heard,—from any source concerning which they are informed.

Select such subjects, occasionally, as are connected with their studies. There are two advantages in this suggestion: they will feel not entirely at sea,—that they are in possession of authorities in the shape of text-books which can be consulted; and it has the effect of obliging them to reproduce their lessons in their minds, and impress them on their memories.

Let the topic be in sympathy with the disposition of the pupil. You come before the class, for instance, with four subjects: Berries; Garden; Moving West; Countries under Mahometan Religion. You distribute them silently, reasoning in a manner like this: Berries will suit Martha, as she is full of vigorous life inclining to all sorts of pleasure; Garden will please Emma, for its domestic associations are in harmony with her retiring disposition; Moving West will afford Anna an opportunity to indulge her vein of tender sentiment; while the Mahometan idea will employ the historical knowledge of Alice.

Teachers who assign subjects should have a sufficient assortment always on their memorandum. The sources are various whence miscellaneous themes may be drawn. First, most works on Rhetoric have columns of them, but the majority of these are too hard for the common school. In the second place, not being able to find what he wants in books, the teacher must think out a catalogue for himself. Let some general thought be taken, and resolved into individuals; as, some man, or some journey, will contain in the very idea, hundreds of biographies, or hundreds of trips. Again, the season or the locality may suggest. Themes drawn from surrounding nature or passing events will often elicit a cordial response from the pen of the practical scholar. Such are the prairies of the west and the mountains of the east; the changes of the year; the holidays; these war-times with their stirring novelties.

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

1. Uses of snow.
2. Uses of rain.
3. Uses of water.
4. Berries.
5. Our garden.
6. Our yard.
7. Moving west.
8. Visiting east.

9. Our old home.
10. Away at school.
11. Kinds of flowers.
12. Our house-plants.
13. Fourth of July.
14. Thanksgiving Day.
15. Kinds of diseases.
16. Kinds of trades.
17. Pleasures of traveling.
18. Pleasures of home.
19. Christmas.
20. Kinds of tools.
21. Kitchen and furniture.
22. Parlor and furniture.
23. Our sitting-room.
24. Evils of war.
25. Kinds of rocks, and uses.
26. House cleaning and miseries.
27. Necessary to good breakfast.
28. Necessary to good dinner.
29. Different materials used for clothing.
30. Miseries of winter.
31. Miseries of summer.
32. Animals useful to man.
33. Animals hurtful to man.
34. Pleasures and dangers of the sea.
35. Our town.
36. Visit to friends.
37. Evils of slavery.
38. Uses of gunpowder.
39. Ancient arms.
40. Modern arms.
41. Leading Union generals.
42. Leading Confederate generals.
43. A Sanitary Fair.

SECTION XIX.

WHEN TO READ.

In the schools of boyhood days, all the pupils who wrote compositions read them on the same day,—generally on Wednesday or Friday afternoon. What a delightfully monotonous time it was! The first few essays were received with attention, of course, as furnishing fresh diversion for childish novelty; but as one after another of a long list of writers appeared on the rostrum, to rehearse with the most mechanical articulation efforts that possessed neither the humor of Hood nor the imagination of Byron, the effect was irresistibly tedious: each additional piece seemed to form a new term in an arithmetical progression of disgust. What a picture the school-room presented of tortured impatience! As a consequence, performances really meritorious fell on ears too weary to appreciate; and restless faces on all sides warned the modest authors to finish the reading of such dull nonsense. Indeed, if the A-B-C department is also under your gentle care, you will soon discover that the youngsters infinitely prefer the excitement of a paper-ball warfare to the entertainments of literature.

In common intermediate schools, whether composition-writing be conducted in classes or as a general exercise for all, it will be found more satisfactory to distribute the reading of the pieces over the time that intervenes between one period of assigning subjects and the next. For instance, if there are ten pupils in the class, and you have them write every week, let two read every day whenever it may suit,—say at the close of the afternoon's recitations. In this way the exercises of each day are diversified with original efforts; very little time is withdrawn from the regular programme of study; the reading, being of short duration, will receive a careful hearing; and both teacher and scholar will feel disposed to make more searching criticisms than when hurried and fatigued by a great variety.

Most academies and high schools devote one or two half-days during the month to what are called rhetorical exercises. These

occasional jubilees are anticipated with much pleasure by the boys and girls, as a temporary relief from the demands of laborious study. Rightly conducted, there is no tedium because no monotony. At these times, when declamation, essay, selection and original speech succeed in pleasant alternation, and when the various productions are characterized by thought and finish, the afternoon, far from being dull and mechanical, proves one of fine literary discipline and high social enjoyment.

SECTION XX.

SUBJECTS FROM GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.

The exercise of composition should be considered as beneficial for the awakening of thought as for the elaboration of style. Hence, in the case of older scholars, the subjects assigned to them should satisfy the two interrogatories: Do they understand it? Will it extend their knowledge?

The boys and girls are numerous that can frame pretty sentences gleaned from newspaper paragraphs or borrowed from the poets, about Spring, Summer, or other sentimental texts. With such themes, they soon dash off a page of glittering romance, which makes not the slightest draft on the intellectual powers of either writer or reader. Give these same ready writers, *The difference in character between people of warm and of temperate climates*, and their genial inspiration ceases at once. Why? Simply because thinking is irksome; they discover that rhapsodizing will not answer here, and to careful reflection they are indisposed. As the youthful mind, therefore, has a natural tendency to fanciful expression, there is no need of seeking its cultivation in that particular; rather give such topics as, besides proper discipline in language, will arouse to independent research.

In assigning themes from Geography and History, let this principle be borne in mind. If the subject be drawn from Geography, let it not be any particular country or topic of the same name in the book; for, if the pupil is writing on "Ohio,"

or "Philadelphia," unless sufficiently read to consult foreign sources, his production will be a mere imitation of the textbook, with sentences entirely copied, or but slightly transposed. Propose some general head under which various particulars must be arranged by patient comparison. Your class have just gone over the United States, their heads confusedly full of the special descriptions of soil, climate, people, appended to each. To give them an opportunity of sorting this medley, subjects like these may be found advantageous: "The Iron States, People and Manufactures;" "The States bordering on the Lakes, and leading pursuits." The pupils will thus be obliged to look over their books, and classify facts in this particular.

In History the same method may be pursued. If the teacher suggest "The Pilgrims" as the theme, there is the temptation of necessity from absence of other authority, to quote largely from the manual studied, closely following the author's thought and style. If your class are in history of the United States, a little labor on your part can prepare questions covering the ground over which they have gone, and calling for a systematic arrangement of the knowledge acquired. Thus, "Some account of the States first settled by the French," or "The different Explorers sent from Spain to America," will serve to review and impress these facts on the mind.

The thoughtful teacher will readily perceive that this plan of generalization may be applied to Philosophy, Chemistry, Rhetoric, and other of the sciences.

Subjoined are lists of subjects, many of which, according to the method proposed, demand some examination of the respective sciences to which they refer. They are so framed that the pupil can not find the material ready-made to his hands in the book before him, but must of necessity, search and compare; and in this process lies the drill at which we aim.

SUBJECTS FROM GEOGRAPHY.

1. Mahometan Religion, condition of countries under it.
2. Different kinds of governments, and what nations under each.
3. The English, habits, appearance of country, &c.
4. The Irish, " " "
5. The Germans, " " "
6. The French, " " "
7. Products we use from abroad.
8. Products we use from home.
9. Food of different nations.
10. Pursuits of different nations.
11. Pleasures of cold lands.
12. Pleasures of warm lands.
13. Nile and its curiosities.
14. Hudson, towns and scenery.
15. Mississippi, towns and scenery.
16. Wild animals of United States.
17. " " India.
18. " " South America.
19. Deserts and their dangers.
20. Greatest curiosities of the world.
21. Largest cities of the world, and finest public buildings.
22. Largest rivers, and people on banks.
23. Celebrated Islands, as Elba, St. Helena, Juan Fernandez, &c.
24. Alps, scenery, dangers, &c.
25. Coal, countries, uses, &c.
26. Nations living chiefly on agriculture.
27. " " " commerce.
28. " " " manufactures.
29. Wheat, countries, uses, &c.
30. Cotton, " "
31. Sugar, " "

32. Corn, countries, uses, &c.
33. Metals, kinds, countries, uses, &c.
34. Different Religions, and countries under them.
35. Route from St. Petersburg to Quebec.
36. Route from Canton to New Orleans.
37. Route from New York to Alexandria.
38. Route from Boston to Calcutta.

SUBJECTS FROM UNITED STATES HISTORY.

1. States settled by English, success and object.
2. States settled by Spaniards, success and object.
3. First voyagers to America, object, &c.
4. Causes and results of early Colonial wars.
5. Indians, primitive and present homes and condition, &c.
6. Causes of Revolution.
7. Number and causes of wars between England and the United States.
8. Growth of our country since the Revolution.
9. Our Pacific coast, how acquired, causes of growth, &c.
10. Mexican War.
11. Greatest American Generals.
12. Greatest American Statesmen.
13. Greatest American Inventors.
14. Appearance of America when Columbus came.
15. Founding and history of our large cities.
16. Different ways in which the United States gained its territory.

SECTION XXI.

WRITTEN DEBATES.

Written debates arouse quite an enthusiasm. Give a question involving an affirmative and negative, appointing two of the best writers to choose sides. On the day set apart for the reading, that the affair may have its due effect, let affirmative and negative alternate in the usual order. It is amusing to see

the varying shades of triumph or mortification on the countenances of either party as each successive reader seems to change the balance of argument. The giant combat of Hayne and Webster transfixed the Senate; and thus, in a trifling way, do these innocent paper contests arouse the mind of the school.

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN DEBATE.

1. Winter night more enjoyment than summer day?
2. Life in city more desirable than in country?
3. Has a Republic more advantages than Monarchy?
4. Is East pleasanter as residence than West?
5. More pleasure on Fourth of July than on Christmas?
6. Has corn as many uses as wheat?
7. Potato as useful as apple?
8. Fruits of temperate as desirable as those of torrid zone?
9. Should girls have the same studies as boys throughout?
10. Would more holidays be a benefit to our people?
11. Does our nation esteem generals more highly than statesmen?
12. Should the common traveling circus be allowed?
13. Are the wonders of nature as great in Western as Eastern Continent?

SECTION XXII.

SOCIAL LETTER.

"Class, to-day I shall read you a letter which I have recently written:

DIXON, Sept. 5, 1863.

FRIEND PARKER:

I have just been strolling along the banks of the river, and find your letter awaiting me on my return.

Since our last meeting, I have had a delightful visit to the home of my boyhood. It gave me great pleasure to grasp by the hand the friends and neighbors of other days. As I gazed up and down the long, narrow street, strange feelings filled my

heart. Here were spent the earliest years of my life, and here were formed those genial friendships that survive when other friendships grow dim. One Sabbath I sat in the old church. All is quiet and heavenly here as of yore, though the world without has rocked to its very foundations. The graveyard looks as gray and mossy and solemn as ever.

I am now reading Cowper for the second time. Of all the poets, he is one of the most amiable. How beautiful his gentle nature appears as he plays with his pet hares or gazes on the picture of a sainted mother!

It has been raining for two days, but this evening the western sky is clear and red, giving promise of a brighter morrow. Let me hear from you soon.

Your affectionate friend,

WILHELM.

Call their attention to the board, and explain the ordinary requisites of a letter by writing portions on the board before them. As some of the class may have very crude ideas in regard to the operation, it will be necessary for you to be explicit even to minuteness. Advise about every little point: "Put the place and date at the right on the first line; the name of the person addressed, on the second line at the left; begin the first sentence on the third line. When beginning a new topic, commence a short distance from the margin; this will give your writing a plainer appearance. Put 'Your affectionate friend' on the line below that on which you close the letter, to the right; and your name below this." If you illustrate these directions by lines and words on the board, they will easily understand. "I have written what may be called a social letter. Although in letters of this kind, persons are allowed to write as though they were talking, without particular method—still, for our purpose, to serve you as a sort of guide, you may observe the following order of topics: 1. What you have just been doing. 2. What is going on in the neighborhood. 3. How you are

spending your time. 4. The state of the weather, or any little private or public items of interest to your friend. Ask any questions you are desirous to know. If you omit anything in the body of the letter, add it below, placing P. S. before."

In the same manner, the teacher will be particular in instructions for folding and endorsing. To explain these operations, a sheet of paper and envelope are, of course, necessary. Show them the style of endorsing, by passing a real envelope, properly directed, around the class, or by suitable representation with chalk on the board.

"For the next time, then, we will have letters. Imagine you are writing to some distant friend. Remember the topics and directions, put in an envelope, and endorse as though to be sent off. You will, doubtless, make some mistakes, but the exercise will be continued until you become familiar with the forms."

At another time you may show them by means of examples, how the address at the beginning and the subscription at its close are formal or affectionate according to the relationship of your correspondent. See that they punctuate the letter and envelope correctly. The number and minuteness of your directions must depend on the age and experience of your pupils.

SUBJECTS FOR SOCIAL LETTERS.

1. To a friend, describing your home, situation, &c.
2. " " " aspect of your surrounding country in summer.
3. " " " aspect of your surrounding country in winter.
4. " " " your daily employments.
5. " " " a festival you attended.
6. " " " sleighride, fun, incidents, &c.
7. " " " picnic, games, refreshments, &
8. " " " town you live in, buildings, &c.
9. " " " a visit from distant friends, their route, &c.

10. To a friend, describing wishes and plans for future life.
11. " " " a tea and company you were at.
12. " " " your family circle at night.
13. " " " a day in the country.
14. " " " a day in the city.
15. " " " your school, pupils, and studies.

SECTION XXIII.

GEOGRAPHICAL LETTER.

"To-day I shall read you another kind of letter."

FRENCH'S HOTEL, NEW YORK,
Aug. 17, 1863.

DEAR CHARLIE:

I arrived here on Friday evening, and crossed to Brooklyn on Saturday after breakfast,—looked at Beecher's church, and sauntered through Greenwood Cemetery. Two leading features distinguish this city of the dead from Laurel Hill and Mt. Auburn: the number of its beautiful ponds, and the cathedral-grandeur of the vaults. In the afternoon at Central Park, a mammoth expanse of tree, rock, and hill; and in the evening at Barnum's Museum, where the great showman has, as usual, all sorts of curiosities, dead and alive.

On Sunday attended service at Trinity Church, and on Monday climbed up the steeple. Three hundred steps make one blow. With the pure heavens above, what a varied and magnificent prospect below! The North and East rivers, crowded with ship, schooner, and boat,—Broadway for miles a moving mass and constant roar,—Brooklyn and the towns of Jersey,—in the distance, Forts Hamilton and Lafayette,—in the centre, the harbor sparkling in the sunlight as a thousand keels plough its diamond surface. In the old graveyard at Trinity lie the remains of William Bradford, the early printer to the colonies.

This afternoon at five, I take the Empire State up the Sound for Fall River, and thence, the cars for Boston.

Yours affectionately,

WHITE.

"This we may call a Geographical letter, because the topics of which the description is given belong to that science. You think of the celebrated things in some city, imagine yourself there, and then write to a friend, describing what you have seen. Do not be satisfied with the few, meager items given about a place in your Geography, but try to get information from books or papers at home; this will extend your own knowledge, and make a more entertaining account for the school to hear. For the next time, prepare letters from some town in this country or Europe. Use the same forms as in the social letter."

On another occasion, let a trip be taken to any prominent point, noticing the route, towns passed through, incidents, &c.

If any of the class have made a journey, invite a real account from their pens. An intelligent young lady, in the author's school, on her return from a trip to Boston, contributed a series of graphic letters to our "Paper," containing notices of Niagara Falls, Bunker Hill, the seaside, and the mountain scenery of New Hampshire.

SUBJECTS FOR GEOGRAPHICAL LETTERS.

1. Visit to your old home east, describing route, &c.
2. Voyage to Paris, and curiosities in that city.
3. Trip to California, overland route.
4. Trip to California by sea.
5. Trip to Rome by Gibraltar; sights at Rome.
6. Trip to Athens, through Germany.
7. Trip to New York or Philadelphia by rail.
8. St. Paul to New Orleans.
9. Chicago to Boston.
10. Baltimore to White Mountains.
11. Niagara Falls to Mammoth Cave.
12. Saratoga to Newport.
13. Cincinnati to Cape May.
14. Milwaukee to Quebec, via Lakes and St. Lawrence.

SECTION XXIV.

DIARY.

Pupils naturally get tired of composing after the same method. Indeed, this is doubtless one cause of prejudice against the exercise. To say the student likes change, is to assert a fact common to humanity, old or young. Every plan, therefore, that has the merit of both discipline and variety, should be eagerly employed by the teacher.

"To-day, I will read to you a page from my diary."

Saturday, Jan. 23. Warm south wind, and snow melting. Wrote a letter home. Going to Smith's for tea. Thackeray is dead. The great men are going; within a month have departed Foster the composer, Ingham the painter, Thackeray, and Archbishop Hughes.

Monday, Jan. 25. Need little fire. At Teachers' meeting to-night. Holstein question agitating Europe. Reading Osian.

Saturday, Jan. 30. Thunder storm last night. 34th Ill. Regiment lately back on a visit. Call for two hundred thousand more men. Spring campaign promises to be a vigorous one.

Monday, Feb. 1. At church and sabbath school yesterday. Reading "Imitation of Christ" in the afternoon. Sermon in evening from Acts xvi.—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"Some of you have perhaps seen or heard forms like this. You observe that the day of the week and month is given first, and then short statements of what the writer is doing, what is going on in the great world around, and, if you please, of the weather. Many of these records may seem trifling at the time, and yet, long years afterward, will give much satisfaction, as showing your feelings or employments at that particular age. For the next week you may bring a diary, keeping a brief ac-

count of your duties each day, the state of the weather, and the most important events given in the newspapers."

Certain seasons of the year are especially favorable to the easy execution of this form. Just before dismissing for the Christmas holidays or the long summer vacation, ask your class to make a simple entry of the business and enjoyments of happy days, and bring with them on their return to school. The dull-est minds will have a page at least, and all the reports will be natural and entertaining.

SECTION XXV.

BOOK NOTICE.

"I shall call your attention now to an account of a book which I have lately been looking over."

WALTER IN JERUSALEM. By Daniel C. Eddy, D. D. New York: Sheldon & Co.

This is one of a series of volumes called "Walter's Tour in the East." They are prepared on much the same plan as the Rollo Books, which have been a source of such exquisite delight to thousands of boys and girls. In the present narrative, a party of friends, young and old, are represented as making the tour of Palestine. Walter is an intelligent lad accompanying his father. They visit all the interesting spots in and around Jerusalem,—the Holy Sepulchre, Mount of Olives, Bethany, Calvary, Jordan, and the Dead Sea. The dialogues occurring between members of the group are made the medium of conveying valuable information to the youthful reader in regard to the antiquities and traditions of sacred scenes. So many of the persons and places of the Old and New Testament are mentioned in the story, as to make this little volume an excellent aid in sabbath school instruction.

What delightful satisfaction must pervade the heart, to stand at last amid the hills and plains of that happy land so consecrated from childhood's earliest years as the home of our

Savior! Indeed, to a mind of generous culture, the contemplation of scenes where great men have lived or great deeds have taken place, must ever inspire the noblest enjoyment. To walk through London, the London of Addison, Goldsmith, Shakspeare, and the storied names of our literature,—to meditate at Marathon or Waterloo,—to float down the Rhine with its medieval memories,—to sit by Virgil's tomb,—to stand in St. Peter's—to climb the Pyramids,—to wander by the Jordan! When such thoughts come thronging over the soul, we become restive under the restraints that bind at home, and long to seek at once the fairy spots of our enchantment.

"I have here at the beginning of this article placed the name of the book, its author, and the publishers. An account is then given of the plan and contents of the work, followed by such reflections as are naturally suggested by the subject. You all frequently read books of some kind: they may be histories, biographies, sabbath school books, travels, or any miscellaneous works. It will not require much labor for you to give a few outlines of the subject, and then make a few remarks of your own. You may, therefore, as our next exercise, take the last book you have read, and treat it in the manner described."

SECTION XXVI.

QUESTIONS.

Here is another form, possessing the merit of both variety and profit: secure a list of questions such as are submitted to candidates for admission into the high schools of our cities, select the historical and scientific queries, or such as can be answered in sentences, read to the class, who take them down on their slates, and then at home write out full and careful replies on paper,—the questions themselves being omitted. This you will find a pleasant way of occasionally reviewing pupils in certain branches, as well as a relief for them from the labor of original preparation in the less arduous employment of sifting and copying.

SPECIMEN.

1. Name ten of the largest cities in United States, and describe their location.
2. Give an account of settlement of Pennsylvania.
3. What are the climate and fruits of China.
4. Give some facts about iron, where found, &c.
5. What kind of people live in British America?
6. Give a short notice of first Continental Congress.
7. Point out difference between adverb and adverbial phrase, and give example of each.

The answers to the above questions will occupy a page of foolscap, which in most cases, for beginners, is sufficient. Let no exercise be prolonged to fatigue. Suggest to the class to give each question a separate paragraph, by beginning a short distance from the margin.

SECTION XXVII.

NEWS.

"I have taken a late paper, and selecting the principal items of news from home and abroad, have placed all together in one article."

HOME NEWS.

The Army of the Potomac had another severe battle on Thursday. Hancock made the attack at daylight, forcing the first, and then the second line of the enemy's works, capturing Johnson's division and part of Early's, together with thirty cannon. Lee abandoned his position during the night. Reinforcements are going forward to Grant. An official dispatch from General Butler states that he was pressing the enemy near Fort Darling. Sherman is advancing in the southeast. Johnston evacuated Dalton, and Sherman's forces now occupy the town. During the past three months, sixty pieces of cannon have arrived in Jersey City for the defense of New York

harbor. Great preparations are making for the Central Fair at Philadelphia, in June. The Christian Commission has now one hundred and thirty-nine men on the late fields of battle, amongst the wounded. Recruiting for the hundred days' service is rapidly going on.

FOREIGN NEWS.

The steamship Africa, with European dates to the 1st inst., arrived at Halifax on Thursday. The Danes had evacuated Frederica, and withdrawn to the island of Firmen. The Conference had not yet re-assembled, but was to meet on the 3d. Austria was sending a powerful naval fleet to the Baltic. The insurrection at Tunis continues threatening. The Pope urges Maximilian to respect the rights of the people and of the Church. Meyerbeer, the great composer, died at Paris. In the House of Commons, inquiry was made as to the truth of the statement that the U. S. troops in Minnesota had been permitted to pursue Sioux Indians into British territory.

"This you will find an easy and instructive operation. Take your daily or weekly paper, and extract the most important events happening in our country, and write under the head of Home News; and under the title of Foreign News, affairs of interest across the sea. You will learn from this method, the art of gleaning, in a short time, the leading topics of a newspaper, by glancing over the columns. Undisciplined minds often spend hours in gathering materials from a Daily, for which minutes would suffice. For our next, you may prepare these News Items."

This exercise will also answer as a healthful relief from the labor of original composition. It is not a mere task of copying, but employs their judgment in condensing the various paragraphs, and in choosing the most entertaining. The form exhibited above, appears in many leading papers. In the Philadelphia North American it is styled "Summary of the Daily Intelligence."

SECTION XXVIII.

LOCAL ITEMS.

"To-day I shall read an account of some events that relate to our town."

REJOICING OVER THE WAR.—Our quiet community was joyfully excited yesterday by the favorable dispatches from the Army of the Potomac. Cannon were fired, flags flung to the breeze, and the streets resounded with praise of Grant and the new advance toward Richmond.

PRESBYTERIAN SOCIABLE.—The Ladies' Sociable connected with this church, will meet on next Wednesday evening, at the residence of elder Brown, in the west end of the place. As it will be moonlight, a large attendance is expected.

RUNAWAY.—A horse attached to John Gilpin's beer wagon ran down Water street at a furious rate on Thursday last, dashing the vehicle finally against Cowper's warehouse. Three beer casks were demolished, and as a result, there was a sudden fall in that beverage.

METHODIST PICNIC.—The annual picnic of this flourishing Sabbath School took place on Saturday, at Solitude, near the Brandywine. There was a full representation of parents and children. After appropriate addresses by Rev. Mr. Fletcher, pastor, and Dr. Coke of Philadelphia, the whole company sat down to a bounteous assortment of good things. The remainder of the afternoon was spent in games and general social enjoyment.

THE SEASON.—Spring is fairly here in all her promise and beauty. The trees already afford quite a shade, and the pastures wave with their green luxuriance. Early garden vegetables are coming on, and rhubarb pies and asparagus have cheered our table for a week. Wheat is thriving, and farmers are planting their corn. The air is balmy with opening vegetation, and the heavens have put on Bryant's "blue of May."

"This is what is commonly called 'Local Items.' You have all doubtless noticed that there is a column devoted to this purpose in the weekly and daily papers. Each event has a separate paragraph, preceded by an appropriate heading. For next week I wish each of you to bring a page of local items. Begin to-day to jot down every movement you hear of. Do not wait for some dire catastrophes or wonderful exhibitions to supply your demand. In our staid neighborhood the journalist must be thankful for the most ordinary transaction. A stray dog, a passing hand-organ, a strange face in the street, are all certainly trifling affairs, and yet will answer our purpose very well, and make quite a readable description."

SECTION XXIX.

JOURNAL.

This is presented last, because demanding more reflection than the preceding methods. A fact is stated, and a train of thought deduced from it; or a sentiment uttered with the reverie to which it may lead. In the biographies of distinguished persons are often found criticisms on men and things; and our plan is similar in design.

"This afternoon I shall read a leaf from my Journal."

Wednesday, Sept. 10. Driving home from Empire this evening, could not help admiring the bright waters of Rock river as they sparkled in the rays of the evening sun. How essential a feature is water to the full beauty of a landscape! When a Greek islander was taken to admire the charms of the vale of Tempé, so celebrated throughout Greece, after gazing in silence he at last exclaimed, "The sea! the sea! where is it?" A sweep of country, extensive and variegated as it may be, without a noble lake or stream to enliven it, is like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. Let them laud our high and dry prairies who will; but give me the mountains with their wild torrents and crystal cascades.

Thursday. The autumnal winds have begun to blow. Before many days we must bid adieu to the warm breezes of the south. The fields will soon be clad in dying yellow; and the forest leaves put on their gorgeous hues of crimson, gold and purple.

Friday. Reading "Forty Years' Familiar Letters of Dr. Alexander." What a distinguished family the Alexanders were! Archibald, one of the fathers of the Presbyterian church in America; Addison, a Biblical and Oriental scholar of the most extensive research; Jas. W., for varied learning and genial eloquence, foremost in the sacred profession to which he belonged.

Monday. Passed a group of men hanging around a blacksmith shop. Does the neighborhood exist that has not some favorite center for idlers—some spot where loafers most do congregate? What sage counsels are set forth for guiding the ship of state through stormy seas! A resort of this kind must have been the inn in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*,—

Where village statesmen talked with looks profound;
And news much older than their ale went round.

"In the Diary, you recollect we simply state what is done, without any comment; in the Journal, after naming an occurrence, we proceed to set down the appropriate remarks that naturally result from it. This method requires a little more study, but practice will speedily give you familiarity and pleasure in preparing them."

SECTION XXX.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

As the school is a preparation for life, all its discipline should as far as possible have a practical bearing. Let the real operations of the outer world be introduced in the recitations of the pupil, and the value of his studies, as fitting for active business as well as for mental pleasure, will assume a new importance.

Composition writing may thus be made the medium of considering the various forms of advertisements which many persons are obliged to employ. Every daily paper contains paragraphs similar to the following:

FOR SALE—HORSE AND BUGGY.—A black horse, five years old, and a good traveler. The buggy and harness perfectly new. Apply at 1308 Chestnut st.

FOR SALE,—A pleasant two-story Cottage, finely situated on the North Side, near City Limits, containing seven rooms, and in good repair. Property also contains barn, cistern, garden, and variety of fruit-trees. Apply to I. R. Diller, Marine Bank Building, or on premises to R. F. Ruth.

FOR SALE,—A splendid Farm, containing 625 acres of fine rolling land, mansion with all modern improvements, large barn and stables, ice-house, orchard in full bearing, together with abundance of smaller fruits, timothy meadows, good pastures with unfailing water, and ample proportion of plow-land. The place is 30 miles from Chicago, 2½ miles from a railroad station, and in a desirable neighborhood. Price, \$35 per acre. A superior lot of farm implements, and a choice stock of horses, cattle, and sheep, for sale on the premises when the farm is sold. A map of farm and terms can be obtained of A. J. Galloway, 189 Lake street.

As an exercise, let pupils describe in a similar manner, property of their parents or neighbors.

TO RENT—A RARE CHANCE,—A first-class Dwelling House in perfect order, newly papered and painted throughout, with all the modern conveniences. Situated in Jamaica Plains. Rent, \$500 per annum. Apply at 141 State street.

BOARDING.—Two gentlemen wishing a pleasant front room, with closet, and within five minutes' walk of the Post Office, can be accommodated at a reasonable rate, at 174 East Madison

street. Two day boarders can be accommodated at \$3.50 per week. References required.

Let the pupils describe their own homes as for rent, or speak of the advantages of some boarding-house known to them.

LOST—\$5 REWARD.—Estrayed from my farm, one light red cow, with large white spots on her shoulders, white face, wide-spread horns, large white udder; 7 years old; estrayed Saturday, 7th inst. Whoever will return her to the owner, shall receive the above reward.

SAMUEL PATCH, Niagara.

LOST,—At or near the Post Office, a Portmonnaie, containing a small sum of money; also a check for a bonnet at Hew's Bleaching Establishment; and some papers valuable to none but the owner. The finder will be liberally rewarded by leaving the same at Daguerre's Gallery, Main street.

Let pupils speak of some property of their own as lost, describing it fully.

WANTED,—A situation as Book-keeper or General Clerk in any good mercantile business, by an active young man, of good education and temperate habits, who can give first-class reference. Address O. K., Box 1001.

WANTED.—A lady well qualified to teach, is willing to take a school for the summer, not too far from the town. Is prepared to give instruction in the Languages or Mathematics. Best references furnished. Address P. R. O. F., Rockford.

Let pupils speak of themselves as desiring some situation, giving age, qualifications, &c.

FOUND,—On Tuesday evening, near the bridge, a gold pin with the initials C. S. E. in hair. The owner proving property and paying for this advertisement, can obtain the same at Iron's Hardware Store.

FOUND.—A large, black Newfoundland dog came to my premises on May 14th. Is very good-natured; collar on neck, but no name. Owner can obtain the animal by calling on
ROSA BONHEUR, Elkhorn.

Pupils may describe some article of schoolmate as found.

STOLEN—\$5 REWARD,—From residence of subscriber, two doors west First National Bank, dozen silver tea-spoons, marked with initials W. G. The above reward will be paid for the recovery of the articles.

Let pupils describe some property,—horse, watch, furs, &c.,—as stolen from home.

NEW GOODS.—A. G. Downs & Co., 150 Lake street, having made extensive preparation for the coming season, now offer a most complete stock of Foreign and Domestic Dress Goods, in choice and novel styles. Cloaks and Mantillas, low priced and medium to fine goods, latest Paris styles. Shawls, best American makes, and novelties in French and Scotch. Rich Embroideries and Laces, Gloves, Hosiery, Table Linens, &c., &c. Bought for cash, and sold at the lowest prices.

A. G. DOWNS & CO.

BOOTS AND SHOES.—Theo. Miller respectfully informs the ladies and gentlemen of Lancaster that he has removed his Boot and Shoe Store, and can now be found at No. 4 North Queen street, where he is fully prepared to fill all orders with which he may be favored. All work is made under his immediate supervision, and warranted to give entire satisfaction. A large assortment of boots, fancy gaiters, &c., constantly on hand. Latest styles received at once from Philadelphia.

THEO. MILLER.

The pupils may write an advertisement for some firm in the town in which they live.

MARRIED,—In this city, on the 4th inst., at Grace Church, by the Rev. Augustus Creamcheese, Oliver Rip Van Winkle, Esq., of Sleepy Hollow, and Miss Flora McFlimsey, of this city.

DIED,—At Greenwood, March 30, Hervey C. Young, of inflammatory rheumatism, in the 37th year of his age. Funeral from his late residence, this (Saturday) afternoon, at 2 o'clock.

Let the pupils, for these latter forms, take real events occurring in the neighborhood.

SECTION XXXI. *Publishing*

SCHOOL PAPER. *student writing*

The school "Paper" is a common feature in many places. The majority of them, however, scarcely deserve the name, as they are merely collections of compositions, with a conundrum at intervals to vary the monotony. To give the highest interest to your "Gems" or "Caskets," make them, as far as proper, imitations of the daily gazette—containing editorials, local items, letters from home and abroad, book notices, news summary, advertisements, and the various features of a well-conducted sheet. These miniature journals may be prepared in two ways: the teacher may preserve the best efforts that are read on ordinary composition days, and when a sufficient number and suitable variety have been gathered, have the "Tribune" made up; or, if your class be large enough, a paper can be compiled at once, by your assigning the different departments essential to variety to different pupils: thus, John and Susan may write letters from foreign cities; Peter and Matilda, letters from points in United States; Albert and Mary may give notices of books last read; Charles and Jennie may prepare a list of advertisements; Anna may compile a news summary; George and Emily, a column of local items; Martha, a foreign news summary; David, Nancy, and Lydia, take regular compositions; while Laura and

Delia, as editors, will arrange editorials. Do not let these articles be thrown together promiscuously, but follow a certain order; say, 1, compositions; 2, editorials; 3, home and foreign news; 4, letters; 5, book notices; 6, local items; 7, advertisements. To this list the ingenious teacher may add other characteristics, as a poet's corner, or a jester's budget. Let there be no articles copied from books or papers; it is not the design of the Casket to display a rich assortment of imported goods, but to make a truthful exhibit of fabrics of domestic manufacture.

If you desire the "Luminary" to have its appropriate effect, do not entrust its entire arrangement to the editors, but give them the benefit of your suggestions; and if so inclined, one or two sparkling contributions from your pen. There is usually a great amount of unnecessary labor by the editors' copying all the articles in their own handwriting. This can easily be avoided by requesting the students to write on foolscap in a plain hand, with a space of two inches at the top, and to furnish the efforts a few days beforehand to the editors, so that there may be abundant time to decipher all hieroglyphics. In this way, the articles will be on half sheets, which can readily be bound together with a ribbon through the top space. They are thus as conveniently read as in book form, without the foolish toil involved. Do not make the "Paper" a formal thing, reserving it for such state occasions as the closing examination of the term, but let it occur as often as the age or ability of your pupils can provide an interesting assortment for its columns.

An Observer thus prepared with an eye to varied arrangement and entertaining topics, affords peculiar enjoyment to the assembled patrons. In rural districts, fall and winter evenings seem to be the favorite time for school entertainments; and on such occasions, a spicy paper, well read, with the accompaniment of a few declamations, or a short debate, singing by the children, and a remark by yourself, will not only be a treat for the people, but tend also to elevate the literary taste of the neighborhood, and excite an increased interest in your labors.

INVITATION AND REPLY.

Mrs. Hamilton presents her compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Adams, and requests the pleasure of their company at tea, on Friday evening next, at 6 o'clock.

Home, Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Adams accept with pleasure Mrs. Hamilton's kind invitation for Friday evening.

Revere House, Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Adams regret that absence from the city will prevent their acceptance of Mrs. Hamilton's polite invitation for Friday evening.

Revere House, Wednesday.

The pupils may write invitations and replies to each other.

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.

PHILADELPHIA, May 17, 1864.

MY DEAR GREENLEAF:—

Permit me to introduce my old friend, Thomas Erskine, who is on a summer ramble through the east. He is a gentleman of fine culture and extensive attainments.

Any attention will be thankfully received by him, and duly appreciated by

Yours truly,

BOUVIER KENT.

JOHN W. GREENLEAF, ESQ.,
Boston.

NEW YORK, May 18, 1864.

MR. DAVID CROCKETT,

MY DEAR SIR:—The bearer, Mr. George Catlin, is now making a tour in the west, in the collection of materials for a work on Indian Antiquities. In the prosecution of this arduous enterprise, he desires the co-operation of the friends of science.

Whatever assistance you may be able to render him in furtherance of his scheme, will be highly esteemed by

Your Friend,

G. R. GLIDDON.

The pupils may write letters of introduction for each other.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

ACADEMIA, May 5, 1864.

The bearer, Miss Jane Grey, has attended my school at intervals for four years, and, as a pupil, has ever been diligent in application and correct in deportment. To those desiring a teacher, I can cordially recommend her as a lady of refinement and intelligence.

ROGER ASCHAM.

AMSTERDAM, May 1, 1864.

This is to certify that Johann Richter has been personally known to me for the last five years. He is a man of good moral character, and perfectly reliable in any engagement he may undertake. I cheerfully recommend him to any desiring a faithful workman.

CARL LESSING.

Let the pupils write recommendations for their schoolmates, or for servants in the family.

NOTE.

\$500.

NEW YORK, May 18, 1864.

Thirty days after date, I promise to pay George Bancroft or order, Five Hundred Dollars, value received.

J. G. PALFREY.

DRAFT.

\$1000.

BOSTON, June 1, 1864.

Ten days after date, pay to Charles Sumner or order, One Thousand Dollars, value received, and charge to my account.

EDWARD EVERETT.

ORDER.

CHICAGO, May 10, 1864.

Messrs. S. C. Griggs & Co. will please pay to the bearer,
Thirty Dollars, in Merchandise, on my account.

I. R. DILLER.

RECEIPT.

\$300.

PHILADELPHIA, June 3, 1864.

Received of D. P. Brown, Three Hundred Dollars, on
account.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co.

These are the simple forms of common business transactions. The pupil should become so familiar with them as to write out any at the mention of the name. Any Book-Keeping will furnish a variety of these and other forms, if the teacher desire it.

SECTION XXXII.

EXTEMPORE WRITING.

Many teachers practice extempore composition as a daily exercise. A subject is given, five minutes by the watch to write upon it, and at the expiration of the time the efforts are read. As a relief in the midst of study, this performance is perhaps refreshing; and as a means of cultivating readiness of mind, may, in the hands of skillful artists, be made beneficial. Its great liability to abuse, however, renders its encouragement questionable. Children are apt to get the impression that they are writing against time,—to measure the excellence of a production, not by the beauty of its execution, but by its length and rapidity in achievement. Whately alludes to Debating Societies as having a tendency to encourage crudeness of thought and inelegance of language; and a similar criticism applies to the method under consideration.

SECTION XXXIII.

STYLE.

Pupils soon learn to appreciate the beauty of fine writing. Long before they are ready for Rhetoric, or the nice analysis of language, they are prepared to recognize the wide difference between the styles of authors. The Reading Book is a good medium for this purpose. As, from day to day, the lessons change from writer to writer, a few explanations by the teacher will enable the pupil to distinguish the peculiarities of each—the majesty of Milton, the smoothness of Pope, Johnson's measured pomp, Macaulay's picturesque narration. Occasionally read to the class half an hour on an afternoon, making selections from authors whose manner of expression shows a marked contrast. A paper from the Spectator, an essay from Elia, or an episode from the Conquest of Mexico, will, in turn, delight with the finished ease of Addison, the quaint humor of Lamb, the classic elegance of Prescott.

SECTION XXXIV.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

Pupils occasionally become discouraged. Ideas do not spring up readily; words do not pour forth fluently; sentences do not arrange themselves by magic; and they are willing to give an enthusiastic adherence to the general statement, *poeta nascitur, non fit*. They are inclined to believe that easy composition is a gift vouchsafed to a few favored Scotts and Macaulays, and that it is absurd for common mortals to attempt the least success in this department. To remove every such prejudice, as well as to inspire with new ardor, the laborious perseverance of great masters of style should often be held up before them. Nothing so soon incites to deeds of grandeur as the influence of noble example. "Thirty centuries look down upon you!" exclaimed Napoleon to his army at the foot of the pyramids. As Herodotus recited his epic annals before assembled Greece, Thucydides wept,—but they were tears of a generous resolve.

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Take the storied names of earth; and they have toiled like Titans. Virgil kept revising the *Æneid* till his death. Paradise Lost is said to have been conceived by Milton in his sixteenth year, and yet the bard was old and blind ere his great work appeared on its immortal mission. Pope's melodious verses cost him infinite labor. Nine years intervened between the inception and completion of Gray's Elegy, but the Elegy is a monument that will exist with the race. Gibbon prepared the first chapter of the "Decline and Fall" three times before he was satisfied to bequeath it to posterity. Addison often stopped the press to change a preposition. Hume's first literary performance met with little favor. John Foster had not the pen of a ready writer, yet careful industry gave to the world "Essays on Decision of Character." Single couplets in the "Irish Melodies" cost Moore the reverie of a day. Burns' sweet lyrics were not the offspring of sudden fancy, but thoughtfully conned "along the mountain side." Prescott never heard from the first ambitious article which he sent to the North American Review. The early efforts of John Lothrop Motley gained him but a trifling reputation; the research of after years has placed the "Dutch Republic" among the classic volumes of the library. Remember Pope's declaration:

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance;
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

*Followed by
blank paper -
about 15 pgs.*

