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THE HISTORY OF COMPOSITION TEACHING
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
Before 1900

A THESIS

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by

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Vita

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and scope

Written composition is not a popular subject. When the students in a California high school a few years ago were asked to rank their studies in the order of preference, composition was at the bottom of the list.¹ It would seem that in spite of the laboratory, project, contract, and other methods, there is still much to be learned about the teaching of composition. The purpose of this study, however, is not to make any specific contribution to the methods of composition teaching, but rather, by adding a page to the history of American education, to furnish a broad background so that the experimenter in methods of composition teaching can see the problem in perspective.

More specifically, this investigation seeks to answer the following questions:

1. When and where was English composition first taught in American secondary schools? What influences brought it into the curriculum?

1. Mirrielees, Lucia B., Teaching Composition in High School, 201.

2. How rapidly was the teaching of English composition introduced into American secondary schools?

3. When did English composition become a recognized part of the curriculum? What influences led to its inclusion in the course of study?

4. What were the methods used in teaching English composition from 1750 to 1900?

Partial answers to these questions have been given in studies in allied fields, but no one, to the writer's knowledge, has traced the history of the subject from its beginnings in America and presented the results in organized form. Professor Rollo L. Lyman, in his dissertation, English Grammar in American Schools Before 1850, makes many references to composition teaching. More recent developments in one section of the country are presented in John E. Stout's thesis, The Development of High-School Curricula in the North Central States from 1860 to 1918. Since these studies do not deal solely and specifically with composition teaching, they do not give the comprehensive and thorough treatment the subject should receive.

Definition of terms

This study is concerned with the subject of English composition, "instruction and practice in the art of expression," as distinct from rhetoric, "formal or

systematic instruction in the theory of expression, parallel to instruction in formal or systematic grammar.¹ Training in expression as manifested in the writing of essays and other exercises is the subject of investigation. Some incidental discussion of grammar, rhetoric, and literature is necessary because of the close association of those subjects with composition teaching.

The teaching of composition today is so inextricably interwoven with other phases of English work that one might question whether instruction in English composition can be sufficiently isolated to permit the preparation of a history of its teaching. Fortunately for the investigator, before 1890 the all-inclusive term English was not commonly found in courses of study. The various phases of English, - grammar, rhetoric, composition, and literature, - were usually listed separately.

A real difficulty is encountered, however, in the fact that the term grammar was frequently more comprehensive in its meaning than it is today, being used, at times, to include composition. Barnard used it in that way as late as 1842. (See Chapter II, p. 25) Such implied references have been excluded from this study

1. Carpenter, Baker, and Scott, The Teaching of English in the Elementary and the Secondary School, 219-20.

unless supported by additional evidence. Courses entitled Elements of Composition have also been eyed with suspicion, for frequently they take their name from Irving's popular rhetoric. Such courses are not considered in this study unless it is clear that practice in written composition was included.

Sources

Information relating to the introduction and spread of composition teaching was found mainly in state archives, documentary histories, and state education reports, supplemented by material found in education periodicals. Reminiscences of school days in the early nineteenth century, such as those published by Barnard in his American Journal of Education,¹ were an invaluable aid. Grizzell's² and Hertzler's³ histories of the high school movement in New England were particularly helpful because of the courses of study presented in them.

Evidence as to method was gathered partially from the foregoing sources, but mainly from composition texts in use before 1900. Many of these are in the Cornell

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1. Vols. XIII, XVI, XVII.
 2. Grizzell, Emit D., Origin and Development of the High School in New England before 1865.
 3. Hertzler, Silas, The Rise of the Public High School in Connecticut.

University Library. A large number, however, were made available through the generosity of the libraries of Harvard College, Teachers College at Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania, as well as the Library of Congress, which kindly loaned the necessary texts.

I wish to thank Professor R.H.Jordan,
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CHAPTER I

LACK OF COMPOSITION TEACHING BEFORE 1750

The Colonial schoolboy may have lain awake nights rehearsing As in praesenti or Properia quae maribus, but he at least escaped the agony of filling three pages with his thoughts on Virtue, Pride, or The Results of a Misspent Youth. It was not until more than a hundred years after the first settlers came to the shores of New England that English composition writing found a place in the course of study of the secondary school, for education was still in the grip of the classical tradition. The Renaissance ideal of education as a thorough training in the Greek and Roman languages had migrated to America along with the Cottons, Davenports, Eatons, Dunsters, and Harvards.

At first thought, it might seem more likely that these Puritans who were turning their backs on the mother country would spurn the customs and institutions of that land. But it was not so. After all, the principal quarrel they had with England was an ecclesiastical one. Religion aside, they were prepared to set up a little England on this side of the Atlantic, patterned as closely as possible after the old home to which they were still bound by so many ties. That devotion is

manifested in many ways. When Harvard College was established in 1636, the town was called Newetowne, but its name was soon changed to Cambridge, the alma mater of so many of the settlers.¹ The records of the Town of Boston in 1709 show that provision was made for the appointment of school inspectors "Agreeably to the Usage in England."² Equally loyal were the neighboring New York colonists. Schoolmaster Malcolm of New York City advertised that pupils might enter the school at stated times only, which "is the method of the best Schools in our Mother Country (whom we will not sure, be ashamed of for a Pattern)."³ One schoolmaster also advertised (March 5, 1743-4) that he was "late from Old England."⁴

England in the early part of the 17th century was in a period of educational expansion. "The tide wave of zeal for founding new Latin schools reached its flood about the time that emigration to America began, and the impulse was felt in all the early colonies."⁵ Educational progress in the colonies, however, would not have been so great if it had not been for the large

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1. Cunningham, Familiar Sketches of the Phillips Exeter Academy, 4.
 2. Jenks, Catalogue and Historical Sketch of the Boston Public Latin School, 32.
 3. Pratt, Annals of Public Education in the State of New York, 131. From the New York Gazette, Dec. 30-Jan. 7, 1734.
 4. Ibid., 124.
 5. Eggleston, The Transit of Civilization, 211.

number of educated leaders among the early settlers.¹ By 1647, at least ninety graduates of Oxford and Cambridge had immigrated to New England, where they were found mostly in the pulpit. Of the 20,000 persons (4,000 families) who came to New England down to 1643, one in every group of forty families is estimated to have had a university education.² Cambridge furnished about three-fourths of the leaders, Oxford the rest.³ John Winthrop the elder, John Harvard, Henry Dunster, and Roger Williams were all Cambridge graduates, while Davenport and Mather attended Oxford, leaving, however, without degrees.⁴

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1. The influence of educated leaders is very forcibly illustrated by a comparison of educational beginnings in the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts. In the former, Elder Brewster was the only university man from 1620 to 1629, when Ralph Smith arrived to act as minister. No more educated men arrived for eight years, and pastorates were often vacant as long as ten years, or were filled with laymen. No public schools were established for fifty years. In Massachusetts, on the other hand, where at least 60 university men came between 1630 and 1639, schools were established almost immediately, the Boston Latin Grammar School in 1635, Harvard College one year later. See Dexter, "Influence of the English Universities in the Development of New England." *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, 1879-1880, XVII, 340-352.
 2. Dexter says the reason the colonies drew so heavily on Cambridge rather than Oxford is that "There was something incompatible between the spirit which fostered Laud and the spirit which founded New England." *Ibid.*, 343.
 3. *Ibid.*, 343.
 4. Davenport returned later to take his. See Dexter, *op.cit.*, 343.

The schools established in the colonies under the influence of these men would naturally be similar to those in which they had received their education, schools "classical in aim. The curriculum and text-books dealt with classical authors, Latin and Greek speech, Latin and Greek composition."¹ Charles Hoole,² in A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching School, published in London in 1660, outlines the course of study commonly found in the English schools.³

How to teach Children in the first Forme, the Grounds or Rudiments of Grammar contained in the Accidents, and to prepare them for the Latine tongue with ease and delight.

How to make children of the second Form perfect in the Rules of the Genders of Nouns, and of the Preterperfect tenses, and Supines of Verbs, contained in Propria quae maribus, Quae genus, and As in Praesenti; and how to enter them in writing, and speaking familiar and congruous Latine.

How to make Children of the third Forme perfect in the Latine Syntaxis commonly called Verbum Personale; as also to acquaint them with Prosodia; and how to help them to construe and parse, and to write, and speak true and elegant Latine.

How to make the Scholars of the fourth Form very perfect in the Art of Grammar, and Elements of Rhetorick; and how to

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1. Watson, The Eng. Gram. Schools to 1660, 534.
 2. Hoole was originally principal of a school at Rotherham in Yorkshire, and for many years head of his own school in London. See Hazlitt, Schools, School Books, and Schoolmasters, 93-4.
 3. From the chapter headings in Hoole's book.

enter them upon Greek in an easy way. How to practise them (as they read Terence, and Ovid de Tristibus, and his Metamorphosis, and Janua Latinae linguae, and Sturmius, and Textor's Epistles) in getting Copy of words, and learning their Derivations and Differences, and in varying phrases. How to shew them the right way of double translating, and writing a most pure Latine style. How to acquaint them with all sorts of English and Latine verses, and to enable them to write familiar and elegant Epistles either in English or Latine, upon all occasions.

How to teach Scholars in the fifth form to keep and improve the Latine and Greek Grammars, and Rhetorick. How to acquaint them with an Oratory, Stile and pronunciation. How to help them to translate Latine into Greek, and to make Greek verses, as they read Isocrates and Theognis. How they may profit well in reading Virgil, and easily learn to make good Theams and elegant Verses with delight and certainty. And what Catechismes they may learn in Greek.

How to enter the Scholars of the sixth Forme into Hebrew; How to employ them in reading the best and most difficult Authours in Latine and Greeke, and how to acquaint them with all manner of Schoole-Exercises, Latine, Greek, or Hebrew.

Entrance into the grammar school was open to those who could "readily read English, and write a legible hand, or at least be willing to learn to write, and to proceed in learning Latine."¹ But once in the grammar school, the boy left behind him the English language. To such an extent was this true, that "many scholars from early neglect in the grammar schools were

1. Hoole, New Discovery, 247.

'too backwards to their dying day' in the art of writing the vernacular."¹ The neglect of the native tongue is seen in Brinsley's complaint about the parents of his pupils:

Others, being more ignorant or malicious, upon every light occasion are ready to rage and rail at me, for that their children, as they say, do get no good under me, but are worse and worse. For whereas they could have read English perfectly (it may be) when they came to me, now they have forgotten how to do it.²

The teaching of the vernacular was not without its champions, although at this time instruction in the native tongue had not gotten far beyond the elementary grades. Comenius had mapped out a course of study for children from six to twelve, in which he prescribed learning to read and write well the native tongue and composing grammatically. Unfortunately, Comenius, because of his Orbis Pictus, Vestibulum, and Janua, became more celebrated for his method of teaching Latin than for his ideas on the vernacular. So it was many years before schoolmasters appreciated fully his recommendations.³

Mulcaster, too, thought the mother-tongue the natural language of childhood. In his peroration to the

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1. Eggleston, op.cit., 217. From D'Ewes Autobiography.
 2. Brinsley, Ludus Literarius (1612). See Watson, The Curriculum and Text-Books of English Schools, 162-3.
 3. Quick, Ed. Reformers, 119-171.

Elementarie (1582) occurs that much-quoted defense of the English language:

Our own language bears the joyful title of our liberty and freedom, the Latin remembers us of our thralldom and bondage. I love Rome, but London better; I favour Italy, but England more. I honour the Latin, but I worship the English ... I honour foreign tongues, but wish my own to be partaker of their honour. Knowing them, I wish my own tongue to resemble their grace. I confess their furniture, and wish it were ours. Why not [write] all in English, a tongue of itself both deep in conceit and frank in delivery? ... I do not think that any language, be it whatsoever, is better able to utter all arguments either with more pith or greater plainness than our English tongue ... not any whit behind either the subtle Greek for crouching close, or the stately Latin for spreading fair.¹

A little later John Brinsley in the Ludus Literarius (1612) deplored the neglect of the national idiom in the higher schools:

But to tell you what I think, seems unto me, to be a very main want in all our Grammar schools generally, or in the most of them; whereof I have heard some great learned men to complain; That there is no care had in respect, to train up scholars so, as they may be able to express their minds purely and readily in our own tongue, and to increase in the practice of it, as well as in the Latin or Greek; whereas our chief endeavour should be for it, and that for these reasons: 1. Because that language which all sorts and conditions of men amongst us are to have most use of, both in speech and writing, is our own native tongue. 2. The purity and elegancy of our own language is to be esteemed a chief part of the honour of our Nation: which we all ought to advance as much as in us lieth. As when Greece and Rome and other nations have most flourished, their languages also have been most pure: and from those times of Greece and Rome, we

1. Watson, Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England, 10-11.

fetch our chiefest patterns, for the learning of their tongues. 3. Because of those which are for a time trained up in schools, there are very few which proceed in learning, in comparison of them that follow other callings.¹

To meet the need he suggested that pupils construe Lilley's rules from the Latin, write a friendly letter daily, study Bible history, and take notes on sermons and deliver them again. Furthermore, he recommended "the reporting of a fable in English, or the like matter, trying who can make the best report." And finally, he proposed constant practice in translation from Latin into English with special regard for propriety and purity.²

Charles Hoole in 1660 suggested a method of teaching English, but only in the elementary school as preparation for future classical instruction.³ He did pay some attention to English letter writing in the fourth form of his grammar school, but since all letters were eventually translated into Latin, the English versions were apparently merely to provide a Latin exercise and were unimportant in themselves.

In spite of all the agitation in favor of the vernacular, it made no great headway in the English grammar schools of the 16th and 17th centuries. Latin

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1. See Watson, Beginnings of Modern Subjects, 16-17.
 2. Ibid.
 3. New Discovery, Part I, "The Petty School."

and Greek were still the learned languages, still the marks of the educated person. So it was that when education migrated to America, the classical pattern was still followed.

Examination of the curricula of early colonial schools shows a close similarity to their English models. On June 28, 1660, in accordance with an order of the General Court of Connecticut, the school committee, consisting of the Governor, the Deputy Governor, Mr. Treat, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Street, "magistrates and settled elders", met and "agreed that Mr. Peck, now at Guilford, should be schoolmaster [at New Haven], and that it should begin in October next, when his half year expires there; he is to keep the school, to teach the scholars Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and fit them for the college [Yale]."¹ The law of 1690 prescribing the studies for the Free Grammar Schools of New Haven and Hartford omits mention of Hebrew but adds reading, writing, and arithmetic.² In Plymouth so great was the schoolmaster's devotion to Greek and Latin that the

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1. Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven, from May, 1653, to the Union. Edited by Charles J. Hoadley. Hartford, 1858, 377. Quoted by Clews, Educational Legislation and Administration of the Colonial Governments, 88.
 2. The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, from August 1689 to May 1706. Charles J. Hoadley. Press of Case, Lockwood and Brainard. Hartford. 1868. Vol. IV, p. 31. Quoted by Hertzler, The Rise of the Public High School in Connecticut, 19.

people objected and voted in 1674 that the children "be taught to write and cypher besides that which the country expects from the said school."¹ The General Assembly of New York on October 14, 1732, passed a bill entitled: "An Act to encourage a Public School in the City of New York for teaching Latin, Greek and Mathematicks."² The school was established and according to a newspaper announcement of 1734, there were taught "all the branches of the Mathematicks, Geometry, Algebra, Geography, Navigation, and Merchants Bookkeeping after the most Perfect Manner."³ The astute New Yorker wanted his son to learn to figure even if he could not use the vernacular with propriety. The private schools, although offering a much broader curriculum, failed to include instruction in English, as is evidenced by an advertisement of the Kent Co. School in Chestertown, Md., May 3, 1745:

At Kent County School, in Chestertown, Md., young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Greek and Latin tongues, writing, arithmetic, merchants' accounts, surveying, navigation, the use of the globes, by the largest and most accurate pair in America; also any other part of the mathematics, by Charles Peale. N.B. - Young gentlemen may be instructed in fencing and dancing by very good masters.⁴

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1. Small, "The New England Grammar School, 1635-1700". The School Review, X (Sept. 1902), 521. From the court records of Plymouth, 1672.
 2. Pratt, op.cit., 126-130. Transcript from an original manuscript in the office of the Secretary of State.
 3. Pratt, op.cit., 130, quotes from the New York Gazette Numb. 480, Column 4, Dec. 30 to Jan. 7, 1734.
 4. Steiner, History of Ed. in Md., 33. An unassigned reference.

The utter absence of any composition text-books also attests to the neglect of composition teaching in the 17th and 18th centuries. Barnard's lists of textbooks in the American Journal of Education¹ contain no such title for that period. Neither is a composition text included in Charles Evans' American Bibliography, which lists all books printed in the United States between 1639 and 1799. Several secretary's guides appeared in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, but they can scarcely be considered textbooks. William Bradford² published the first of these in 1698. It was entitled The Secretary's Guide, or, Young Man's Companion, in Four Parts. Part one gave "The Grounds of Spelling, Reading and Writing True English"; part two, "The Method of Writing Letters upon Most Subjects." The other two parts were devoted to arithmetic and business forms. The book was evidently popular, reaching its fifth edition in 1729, when it appeared "Greatly enlarged and carefully corrected." Even more popular, to judge by the number of editions, was Hill's The young Secretary's Guide: or, A Speedy Help to Learning, the first part of which contained "the True Method of Writing Letters Upon any Subject," and the second "an exact Collection of Acquittances, Bills, Bonds, Wills..."

1. Vols. 13, 14, 15.

2. Evans, op.cit., I, pp. 818, 1668, 2997, 3139; II, 4127.

First published in 1708, this book went through seven editions in ten years, and was reprinted in 1727.¹ Although these are not textbooks, they are mentioned because their very popularity is evidence of the neglect of composition in the schools.

College entrance requirements, too, are frequently a good index of what is taught in secondary schools. Especially was this so in colonial times, for the grammar schools of those days did not pretend to be anything but college preparatory schools. In New England's First Fruits (1643), the Boston Latin School is described thus:

And by the side of the Colledge a faire Grammar Schoole, for the training up of young Schollars, and fitting of them for Academicall Learning, that still as they are judged ripe, they may be received into the Colledge of this Schoole.²

The "Old Deluder" law, passed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1647 and later copied and enacted by Connecticut, frankly states that grammar schools shall be set up for the instruction of youth "so farr as they shall be fited for ye university."³ In 1684 a committee of trustees of the Hopkins Grammar School of New Haven maintained:

The Erection of ye s^d Schoole being principally for ye Institution of hopeful youth in ye Latin tongue, and other learned Languages soe far as to prepare such

1. Ibid., I, 1354, 1609, 1885, 2879.

2. Sabin Reprints, Quarto Series, #7, 24.

3. Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, II, 203.

youths for ye colledge & publiqe service of ye Country in Church, & Commonwealth.¹

Since the college curriculum was entirely classical, it is only to be expected that the prescription would be limited to those studies that would be continued in college. This is what Harvard demanded of the entrant for about the first hundred years:

When any Schollar is able to understand Tully, or such like classically Latine Author extempore, and make and speake true Latine in Verse and Prose, suo ut aiunt Harte; And decline perfectly the Paradigm's of Nounes and Verbes in the Greek tongue: Let him then and not before be capable of admission into the Colledge.²

In 1734 Virgil and a Greek text were added. Yale for some years after its founding had the same entrance requirements as Harvard, adding arithmetic in 1745. The College of New Jersey and Princeton demanded no additional subjects.³ The secondary school, therefore, had done its duty when it gave the pupil a thorough grounding in the classics, and a bit later added arithmetic.

Summary

Composition teaching in secondary schools before 1750 was unknown. One can scarcely expect it in the curriculum, since the colonists were heirs to the classical tradition, as a result of which, schools were

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1. Barnard's American Journal of Education, IV (Mar. 1858) 710.
 2. New England's First Fruits, 26.
 3. Brown, The Making of our Middle Schools, 128-29.

patterned directly after those of England in which colonial leaders had received their training. The colleges, too, preparation for which was the main business of the secondary school, prescribed almost nothing for entrance except a thorough foundation in those studies forming the backbone of the college course, the classical languages. The absolute lack of composition textbooks attests further to the neglect of instruction in written expression.

CHAPTER II
THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPOSITION
1750-1820

At the close of the eighteenth century the conventional pattern of classical education was broken. The reason for the change is to be found in the new social and economic life of the country. As an aftermath of the Revolution, a more democratic society developed, which demanded a less restricted form of education. A new and important group, that of the merchants and shopkeepers, was beginning to make itself heard. The main goal of the educated was no longer the ministry. Education was forced to respond to the new influences, for that which had been a necessity in the pulpit was an anomaly in the counting house.

But the grammar schools, now old and set in their ways, were unable to adapt themselves to the changed conditions. Losing the patronage they had once enjoyed, they began to decline, their demise being hastened in some instances by adverse state legislation.¹

1. This was the case in Massachusetts, where, according to the law of 1647, a grammar school was to be set up in any town of one hundred families. By the law of 1789, this number was raised to two hundred families; and in 1824, no grammar schools were required in towns having a population of less than 5,000. See Brown, *op.cit.*, 65, 216.

In their stead grew up the academies dedicated to the task of preparing youth for the business of living. Such was the avowed aim of the Phillips Academy established in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1778, through the generosity of the Phillips family. According to the constitution, the school was founded "for the purpose of instructing Youth, not only in English and Latin Grammar, Writing, Arithmetic, and those sciences wherein they are commonly taught, but more especially to learn them the great end and real business of living."¹ When John Phillips, in 1782, founded the academy at Exeter, New Hampshire, he had the same end in view. The practical Franklin, too, when he drew up his proposals for the education of the youth of Pennsylvania, declared:

As to their Studies, it would be well if they could be taught every Thing that is useful, and every Thing that is ornamental: But Art is long, and their Time is short. It is therefore propos'd that they learn those Things that are likely to be most useful and most ornamental.²

In such a utilitarian scheme of education the vernacular could not fail to find a place. Fortunately, what was being so urgently demanded by the layman, was also sanctioned by the educational theorist. During the latter half of the eighteenth century there were circulated

1. Adams, Some Famous American Schools, 47.
 2. Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania. Facsimile Reprint, 11.

in America treatises by Milton, Locke, Turnbull, Sheridan, Addison and Steele.¹ "Who that reads at all, has not read Milton's 'Tractate on Education'; and also Locke's: and who having read them, does not speak of them in terms of the highest commendation?"² wrote Boucher, in 1773, in his discourse "On American Education". But, he added pessimistically, "how little has either the one or the other contributed to improve the national system of education!" Certainly Franklin was profoundly influenced by both of them, for in his Proposals he constantly cites as authorities both Milton and Locke, and his plan of English education follows almost step by step Turnbull's as described in his Observations upon Liberal Education.³

Instruction in the vernacular had been brought into the elementary schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the efforts of Comenius, Mulcaster, Hoole, Brinsley, and others. It was the task of the eighteenth century to establish it in the secondary schools. The most powerful advocate of such instruction was without doubt John Locke. After his

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1. Lyman has found advertisements of these treatises in colonial newspapers. See his English Grammar in American Schools Before 1850, 55.
 2. A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution, 155.
 3. See Lyman, op.cit., 56; also Appendix B, 158-159, in which by parallel extracts he shows Franklin's indebtedness to Turnbull.

Thoughts Concerning Education appeared, scarcely a writer on the subject failed to quote pages from this authority. So great was his vogue, that even mothers reared their children according to the principles laid down by him.¹

Although far in advance of his contemporaries in many of his ideas, Locke is still the child of his own times in his advocacy of Latin. But he wrote that the education of the gentleman is to go far beyond the classics. He must be thoroughly schooled in his own tongue. If his business in the world is to be done with tongue or pen, he should be taught grammar, but it must be the grammar of his own language, for "There can scarce be a greater Defect in a Gentleman, than not to express himself well either in Writing or Speaking."²

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1. Young Josiah Quincy, about the time of the Revolution, was brought up according to Locke's precepts, or at least, Mrs. Quincy's interpretation of them. As his son Edmund Quincy later wrote: "Locke was the great authority at that time on all subject which he touched, and in conformity with some suggestion of his, as my father supposed, Mrs. Quincy caused her son, when not more than three years old, to be taken from his warm bed, in winter as well as summer, and carried down to a cellar-kitchen, and there dipped three times in a tub of water cold from the pump. She also brought him up in utter indifference to wet feet ... This practice, also, he conceived to have been in obedience to some suggestion of the bachelor philosopher." See Quincy, Life of Josiah Quincy, 19-20.
 2. Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education (ed. by R.H. Quick), 163.

In order to attain perfection of speech he should in his early years be given practice in telling and writing tales. Later,

When they understand how to write English with due Connexion, Propriety, and Order, and are pretty well Masters of a tolerable narrative Style, they may be advanced to writing of Letters; wherein they should not be put upon any Strains of Wit or Compliment, but taught to express their own plain easy Sense, without any Incoherence, Confusion or Roughness. And when they are perfect in this, they may, to raise their Thoughts, have set before them the Example of Voitures, for the Entertainment of their Friends at a Distance, with Letters of Compliment, Mirth, Raillery or Diversion; and Tully's Epistles, as the best Pattern whether for Business or Conversation. The writing of Letters has so much to do in all the Occurrences of human Life, that no Gentleman can avoid shewing himself in this kind of Writing. Occasions will daily force him to make this Use of his Pen, which, besides the Consequences that, in his Affairs, his well or ill managing of it often draws after it, always lays him open to a severer Examination of his Breeding, Sense, and Abilities, than oral Discourses; whose transient Faults dying for the most Part with the Sound that gives them Life, and so not subject to a strict Review, more easily escape Observation and Censure.¹

Even earlier than Locke, Milton had in his tractate "Of Education" (1644) urged a proper attention to the writing and speaking of English. After a full course in Latin and Greek, mathematics, history, and science, young gentlemen should be trained "to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter."²

The editors of the Tatler in 1710 championed the cause of the vernacular:

1. Ibid., 164.

2. Symmons, The Prose Works of John Milton, vol. I, 281-2.

To speak and write without absurdity the language of one's country is commendable in persons of all stations, and to some indispensibly necessary.¹

Addison and Steele recommended the study of English grammar, considering it absurd that young children should be put to the study of Latin grammar when they were not even familiar with that of their own language. Other countries set a better example:

It has been the practice of the wisest nations to learn their own language by stated rules, to avoid the confusion that would follow from leaving it to vulgar use.²

A later essay in the Spectator urged that only such instruction as is practical should be given:³

While I am upon this subject, I cannot forbear mentioning a particular which is of use in every station of life, and which methinks every master should teach his scholars; I mean the writing of English Letters. To this end, instead of perplexing them with Latin epistles, themes, and verses, there might be a punctual correspondence established between two boys; who might act in any imaginary parts of business, or be allowed sometimes to give a range to their own fancies, and communicate to each other whatever trifles they thought fit, provided neither of them ever failed at the appointed time to answer his correspondent's letter.

I believe I may venture to affirm, that the generality of boys would find themselves more advantaged by this custom, when they come to be men, than by all the Greek and Latin their masters can teach them in seven or eight years.

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1. Tatler, IV, #234, in Wynne, Essays on Education (London, 1761), 177-78. Wynne's book was advertised in various colonial newspapers from 1761 to 1769. See Lyman, op.cit., 55.
 2. Wynne, op.cit., 177.
 3. Spectator, V, 353X, in Wynne, op.cit., 154.

The want of it is very visible in many learned persons, who, while they are admiring the styles of Demosthenes or Cicero, want phrases to express themselves on the most common occasions. I have seen a letter from one of these Latin orators, which would have been deservedly laughed at by a common attorney.

In 1742 George Turnbull published his Observations upon Liberal Education in which he recommended following the practice of the Greeks and Romans, who considered it of prime importance that their youth learn their own language first. He said,

What man of sense, if he thinks of the matter seriously, and balances impartially the values of things in his mind, would not rather have his son at fourteen tolerably skilled in geography and history, acquainted with the true method of unraveling nature, and discovering her laws and final ends, and with the duties which justice, public love, and generosity and fortitude require at his hands, and able to express truths of these classes with propriety and taste, in his own language, tho' he should yet have made but small proficiency in any learned or foreign language, rather than utterly ignorant of all these sciences, but quite master of the Greek and Latin grammars, which is all that can be learned, where nothing else is taught.¹

Thomas Sheridan in 1756 wrote British Education: Or, The Source of the Disorders of Great Britain. The cause of England's troubles, he decides, lies in her outmoded system of education. It may have been wise for previous generations to study Greek and Latin, for then all knowledge was recorded in those tongues. Now, he argues, times have changed, and we must do not as our ancestors did, but as we think they might do if they lived in these days. He deplores the fact "that boys

1. Op.cit., 260.

are often able to write exercises in pure and correct Latin who at the same time can not express their thoughts with the least grace or propriety in their own languages."¹ He admits that the English language is not as polished as the Greek or Latin, but believes that it can be perfected. It can become the third great classical language. To that end, as well as the salvation of England, he proposes the study of oratory, since it was through it that the Roman language arrived at its state of perfection.

About 1750 composition entered the curriculum of the American secondary school, the same time that grammar was introduced. Although the latter study made rapid progress, especially in the years immediately after the revolution when, according to Lyman,² it was almost universally adopted into the curriculum of American schools, composition lagged. Several reasons may be assigned for the neglect. Probably the most important was the idea that a knowledge of grammar is the royal road to perfection in speaking and writing. The idea was constantly reiterated by writers of grammar textbooks. Lindley Murray, author, in 1795, of an English grammar which was one of the most popular down

1. Op.cit., 202-3.

2. Op. cit., 70.

to 1850, stated in his preface that "English Grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety,"¹ a definition which, Lyman says, he copied exactly from Greenwood's third edition in 1747.² In accordance with this belief the child was taught the elements of grammar, progressing from a study of the word to more complex forms. There was no place for composition early in the course because the child was still concerned with elementary forms. So even when the importance of correct writing had come to be recognized, composition was robbed of its legitimate place by its handmaiden grammar.

Another reason why the teaching of composition did not progress as rapidly as that of grammar is to be found in the prevailing methods of teaching. Pupils memorized their lessons, and the teacher spent the recitation period "hearing" the lessons. That was the way the Latin schools taught Latin grammar,³ and so

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1. English Grammar Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners, 13.
 2. An Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar, etc. See Lyman, op.cit., 106. He gives almost a full page of similar definitions on pp. 105-6.
 3. Eliphalet Pearson, headmaster at Phillips' Andover Academy in 1780 reported to his trustees: "School begins at eight o'clock with devotional exercises; a psalm is read and sung. Then a class consisting of four scholars repeats memoriter two pages in Greek grammar, after which a class of thirty persons repeats a page and a half of Latin Grammar; then follows the 'Accidence tribe,' who repeat two, three, four, five, and ten pages each." See Adams, Famous American Schools, 49.

when English grammar came into the curriculum, the method was transferred to it.¹ But that could not be done so easily with composition. An entirely new method had to be evolved, and that required time. Consequently the teaching of composition lagged.

And finally, composition was handicapped in the race with grammar, by the additional burden it placed upon the teacher. Schoolmasters of an earlier day were called upon to teach a large number of subjects. For example, in 1762, Ephraim Avery notified the public that in his newly opened school at Second-river, in East-New-Jersey, he proposed to teach

writing and reading English, the Latin and Greek languages, arithmetick, both vulgar and decimal; likewise, Algebra, trigonometry, surveying, guaging, plain, traverse, and mercator's sailing, by several different methods, according to Atkinson's and Wilson's epitomes.²

When the teaching of so many subjects fell upon one individual, it is no wonder that schoolmasters preferred hearing rules of grammar to correcting themes.

In the following sections the gradual introduction of composition into the curriculum between 1750 and 1820 is traced by colonies and states. State archives, documentary histories of education, and personal reminiscences are among the sources consulted. The presence

1. Lyman, *Op.cit.*, 103-131.

2. *N.J.Arch.*, 1st series, vol. XXIV, 106.

of composition in the curriculum is frequently difficult to detect, even when it was taught, because down to 1890 it was mainly an incidental study, and as such was given no specific mention. In the nineteenth century it was commonly listed in a footnote to the course of study, "Composition and declamation throughout the term." Sometimes, too, it was included under grammar, which was a more comprehensive term than it is now.¹

Pennsylvania

It was in Franklin's academy, established in Philadelphia in January, 1751, that composition was first recognized as an important part of the curriculum. Conceived primarily to provide English training, the school would have revolutionized education if it had continued as originally planned by Franklin. Unfortunately, however, it was so far ahead of the times that it was finally beaten down by the force of tradition,

1. Barnard, as late as 1842, employs the term very broadly. In a list of topics to be used at teachers' meetings, he mentions "Grammar -- including conversation, composition, analysis of sentences, parsing, etc." See Barnard's American Journal of Education, I, 710.

In 1864 the Normal School for Female Teachers in Philadelphia required the study of grammar, which was defined as "Review of English grammar, and instruction in etymology, rhetoric, and elements of composition." Ibid., XIV, 730.

and the English department of the academy ceased to exist. As the eminent forerunner of much that is today accepted practice, it deserves more than passing attention.

In 1743 Franklin became concerned over the lack of an academy in which the youth of the province "might receive the Accomplishments of a regular Education."¹ To remedy the condition, he drew up his Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania, but, the time not being opportune for developing the project, since the colonies had become involved in wars, he laid the proposals aside. He revived the idea again in 1749 when he printed and circulated the proposals. His suggestion was evidently well received, for within a few months the necessary funds had been secured. The original plan, however, was somewhat revised in order to satisfy the more conservative subscribers. As originally planned by Franklin, the academy was to go

no farther than to procure the Means of a good English Education. A Number of my Friends, to whom I communicated the Proposal, concurr'd with me in these Ideas; but Mr. Allen, Mr. Francis, Mr. Peters, and some other Persons of Wealth and Learning, whose Subscriptions and Countenance we should need, being of Opinion that it ought to include the learned Languages, I submitted my Judgment to theirs, retaining however a strong Prepossession in favour of my first Plan, and resolving to preserve as much of it as I could, and to nourish the English School by every Means in my Power.²

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1. Franklin, Proposals, Facsimile Reprint, 3.
 2. Franklin, Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia (1789). See Smyth, The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, I, 9-10.

A board of trustees was formed from among the subscribers, and Franklin and Attorney-General Francis were appointed to draw up a constitution. A building was fortunately ready at hand, the hall built in 1740 to accommodate the evangelist, George Whitefield, and to house a charity school. On February 1, 1750, the building was conveyed to the trustees of the academy, and on January 7, 1751, formal opening exercises were held at which the Reverend Richard Peters delivered an address. How many scholars entered at that time is not known, but that the school was popular is evidenced by its rapid growth. By the following September the teaching staff, consisting originally of four members, had been augmented by two ushers in the English school, for the enrollment had grown to over a hundred "notwithstanding the prevalence of the Small Pox in Town."¹

Under the mastership of Mr. Dove, who had for sixteen years conducted a school in Chichester, England, the English school flourished. His scholars soon numbered "upwards of Ninety"², nor did that number diminish during

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1. From Dr. Peter's preface to his opening sermon, which was published by Franklin and Hall late in 1751. See Montgomery, History of the University of Pennsylvania, 141. On September 12, 1751, Franklin wrote to Jared Eliot, "Our Academy flourishes beyond expectation. We have now above one hundred scholars, and the number is daily increasing." Ibid. 123.
 2. Franklin, Observations. See Smyth, op.cit., X, 15.

the two years of his teaching. Mr. Dove, however, considering himself underpaid, resigned his position in July, 1753, to devote his entire time to a school for girls which he had established soon after taking over his duties at the academy. Under his successor,

a good Man, yet not possessing the Talents of an English Schoolmaster in the same Perfection with Mr. Dove, the school diminish'd daily, and soon was found to have about forty Scholars left.¹

The English school, Franklin tells us, never recovered its original reputation, and had degenerated so much by 1763 that its work was not superior to that given in dame schools.² It was so little patronized that on July 23, 1769, there was introduced and passed at a meeting of the trustees a resolution abolishing the English school, since it was no longer defraying expenses. A week later the resolution was reconsidered, and "it was voted to stand as it is, provided it should not be found in any way repugnant to the first Charter granted to the Academy."³ So the English school was not immediately

1. Smyth, op.cit., 15.

2. In the minutes of the trustees, Feb. 8, 1763, is found this record: "The State of the English School was taken into Consideration, and it was observed that Mr. Kinnersley's Time was entirely taken up in teaching little Boys the Elements of the English Language (that is it was dwindled into a School similar to those kept by old Women, who teach Children their letters)." Quoted by Franklin in his Observations. See Smyth, op.cit., X, 17.

3. Ibid., 25-26.

discontinued, but subjects were gradually dropped until in 1770 all that remained of the original English program was English grammar.¹

That was a far cry from the complete course which Franklin had worked out in his Proposals. As far as instruction in the English language is concerned, he recommends, first of all, that grammar be taught. Further,

To form their Stile, they should be put on Writing Letters to each other, making Abstracts of what they read; or writing the same Things in their own Words; telling or writing Stories lately read, in their own Expressions. All to be revis'd and corrected by the Tutor, who should give his Reasons, explain the Force and Import of Words, &c.²

A more detailed account of the offering in English com-

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1. Franklin, in his Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia, written in 1789, attributes the decline of the English school to the partiality of the trustees toward the Latin school. He searched diligently through their minutes and found many evidences of discrimination. In the very beginning the Latin master was to receive twice as much as the English master, although the latter had twice as much work as the former. Appropriations were made for supplies for the Latin school, but none for the English. More teachers were added to the Latin school, and salaries were increased, when the enrolment did not warrant that action. So, gradually, the Latinists on the board "starved out" the English school. See Smyth, op.cit., X, 9-31.
 2. Proposals, Facsimile Reprint, 16-18.

position is given in the Idea of the English School, which Franklin prepared at the request of the trustees.¹ English grammar is to be attended to in the first and second years, followed by a study of rhetoric in the third. Composition is given special attention in the fourth and fifth classes:

1. The complete curriculum is of interest. The following outline is based on his Idea. Smyth, op. cit., III, 21-29.

1st Class

English Grammar
Orthography
Reading of Fables and Stories

2nd Class

Reading with expression
Study of papers like the Spectator

3rd Class

Speaking
Rhetoric
History
Natural and Mechanic History

4th Class

Composition: letters
Ethics
History
Geography
Reading
Speaking

5th Class

Letters and essays
Logic
History
Reading
Speaking

6th Class

History
Rhetoric
Logic
Moral and Natural Philosophy
English authors
Translations from the classics

The Fourth Class

to be taught Composition. Writing one's own Language well, is the next necessary Accomplishment after good Speaking. 'Tis the Writing-Master's Business to take Care that the Boys make fair Characters, and place them straight and even in the Lines: But to form their Stile, and even to take Care that the Stops and Capitals are properly disposed, is the Part of the English Master. The Boys should be put on Writing Letters to each other on any common Occurrences, and on various Subjects, imaginary Business, &c., containing little Stories, Accounts of their late Reading, what Parts of Authors please them, and why; Letters of Congratulation, of Compliment, of Request, of Thanks, of Recommendation, of Admonition, of Consolation, of Expostulation, Excuse, &c. In these they should be taught to express themselves clearly, concisely, and naturally, without affected Words or high-flown Phrases. All their Letters to pass through the Master's Hand, who is to point out the Faults, advise the Corrections, and commend what he finds right. Some of the best Letters published in our own Language, as Sir William Temple's, those of Pope, and his Friends, and some other, might be set before the Youth as Models, their Beauties pointed out and explained by the Master, the Letters themselves transcrib'd by the Scholar.

Fifth Class

To improve the Youth in composition, they may now, besides continuing to write Letters, begin to write little Essays in Prose, and sometimes in Verse, not to make them Poets, but for this Reason, that nothing acquaints a Lad so speedily with Variety of Expression, as the Necessity of finding such Words and Phrases as will suit with the Measure, Sound, and Rhime of Verse, and at the same time well express the Sentiment. These Essays should all pass under the master's Eye, who will point out their Faults, and put the Writer on correcting them. Where the Judgment is not ripe enough for forming new Essays, let the Sentiments of a Spectator be given, and requir'd to be cloath'd in a Scholar's own Words: or the Circumstances of some good Story, the Scholar to find Expression. Let them be put sometimes on abridging a Paragraph of a diffuse Author, sometimes on dilating or amplifying what is wrote more closely.¹

1. Ibid., III, 26-28.

To insure adequate training in English, it was specifically stated in the constitution, which Franklin helped to draw up, that the Rector be chosen with "great Regard ... to his Polite Speaking, Writing, and Understanding the English Tongue."¹

Although Franklin accords composition a respectable place in his course of study, one cannot help but feel as one reads his Observations that he had a far greater interest in declamation. When he deplures the neglect of the English school, he constantly draws attention to the deterioration of the work in public speaking. Mr. Dove had paid a great deal of attention to that branch of learning:

He had a good Voice, read perfectly well, with proper Accent and just Pronunciation, and his Method of communicating Habits of the same kind to his Pupils was this. When he gave a Lesson to one of them, he always first read it to him aloud, with all the different Modulations of Voice that the Subject and Sense required. These the scholars, in studying and repeating the Lesson, naturally endeavour'd to imitate; and it was really surprizing to see how soon they caught his Manner ... In a few Weeks after opening his School, the Trustees were invited to hear the Scholars read and recite. The Parents and Relations of the Boys also attended. The Performances were surprizingly good, and of course were admired and applauded...²

Under his successor the "Performances of the Boys in Reading and Speaking, were no longer so brilliant."³

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1. "The Constitutions of the Publick Academy in the City of Philadelphia." See Montgomery, op.cit., 48.
 2. Observations. Sayth, op.cit., X, 14-15.
 3. Ibid., 15.

By 1763,

Speaking and Rehearsing in Publick were totally disused, to the great Prejudice of the other Scholars and Students, and contrary to the original design of the Trustees in the forming of that School.¹

That Franklin should have been so greatly interested in public speaking is not surprising, for he lived at a time when eloquence was highly prized. The written word bowed to the spoken word, for the press was not yet so prolific, nor were there large numbers of educated readers. The road to power lay through the tongue rather than the pen.² Franklin had, also, in his time, been greatly impressed by the eloquent Whitefield, whose magical words were able to draw from the pockets of the thrifty Franklin not only the coppers, but also the silver and gold coins.³

How greatly the cause of English education was influenced by the brief experiment in Philadelphia, it is difficult to say. Within the city itself there were imitators, Mr. Dove, even before he left the Academy,

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1. Ibid., 17. From the minutes of the trustees.
 2. Franklin himself is the outstanding exception to this statement, for he employed the written rather than the spoken word.
 3. Franklin himself relates the incident in his Autobiography. Whitefield was speaking in favor of an orphanage in Georgia, a project opposed by Franklin because of the expense of sending materials and workmen so great a distance. The fiery preacher, however, made him change his mind. See Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin, I, 85-86.

having set up a female school with a similar program, which he advertised in the Pennsylvania Gazette, August 29, 1751, as follows:

As the Scheme formed by the Gentlemen of Philadelphia, for the regular Education of their Sons, has been happily carried into Execution; the Ladies excited by the laudable example, are solicitous that their Daughters too might be instructed in some Parts of Learning, as they are taught in the Academy. Mr. Dove proposes to open a school at said Academy for young Ladies, on Monday next, in which will be carefully taught the English Grammar; the true Way of Spelling, and Pronouncing properly; together with fair Writing, Arithmetick, and Accounts: So that the Plan recommended by the Universal Spectator may be exactly pursued. Price Ten Shillings Entrance and Twenty Shillings per Quarter.¹

Here we find no mention of composition teaching, and it may well be that Mr. Dove, whose chief renown seems to have been based on his oral work, did not plan to teach composition to young ladies. On Franklin's testimony we learn that several private schools had sprung up "professing to teach what had been promis'd to be taught in the Academy."² A brief description of the curriculum of one of those schools, however, shows no mention of composition. John Jones, "late assistant to Mr. Dove in the academy", in 1754

opened his new School-House where ... the English Tongue will be taught ... to those, whose Parents request it, as a Language, and delivery in the method pursued by that worthy Professor, Mr. Dove when in the Academy, by which his Scholars made such a wonderful Proficiency,

1. Montgomery, op.cit., 143-144.
2. Observations, Smyth, op.cit., I, 21.

and he gained so great a favor deservedly.¹

Outside of the colony, the academy was also known. In the neighboring province of New Jersey, James Van Horne of Dover, in his will dated October 29, 1760, left directions for his son

James to be given the best education the Province of Pennsylvania affords, either at the Academy or Mr. Dove's English school, then to study physic or law and complete his studies in Scotland.²

Maryland, too, was sending its sons out of the state to be educated. In such numbers did they leave that one patriotic citizen signing himself Philo Marilandicus was moved to write a protest (March 6, 1754) to the editor of the Maryland Gazette. At least one hundred Marylanders, he complained, attended annually at the Philadelphia academy. Since the expenses of a student averaged about £50, the state lost each year the sum of £5,000 sterling. He recommended the establishment of one or two academies in order that the money be kept at home.³

Some forty years after the establishment of Franklin's school, we find a schoolmaster in Connecticut imitating the general plan of the Philadelphia academy. Dr. Dwight's school at Greenfield Hill,

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1. Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 24, 1754. Quoted by Lyman, op.cit., 51.
 2. N.J.Arch., 1st ser., XI, 541, footnote.
 3. Steiner, History of Education in Maryland, 29.

Fairfield, Connecticut, is described in a letter¹ by one who had visited the school. The writer was greatly impressed by the progressive methods he found. The procedure was most informal, a few of the boys reciting while the rest studied under the trees. He commented favorably on the attention given to letter writing. Finally,

Before I parted with my kind host, I asked him whether he had adopted the idea of Dr. Franklin, Dr. Rush, and others, respecting the inutility of the dead languages. He told me that he had adopted it in part, but that the prejudices of his countrymen forbade his banishing those languages entirely from his school. He said that he had discovered a new way of teaching them, and that none of his boys ever spent more than two years in learning them. He added, that he thought the time was coming when it would be as absurd to teach the Latin and Greek languages indiscriminately in our schools, as it would now be to navigate a vessel by coasting instead of a magnet.

So, in spite of the failure of the English school in Philadelphia, there is some evidence that the prophet of the new education was not entirely without honor. He had at least been accorded the compliment of envy and imitation. Just how strong an influence he exerted toward the establishment of English instruction, it is impossible to say. The idea was not a new one, as we have already seen: Locke, Turnbull, and Sheridan had been apostles of the new creed. Their doctrines were being spread throughout the colonies, and sooner or

1. Barnard's A. J. of Ed., XVII (Sept. 1867), 185-86. As explained in a footnote, the letter was written to a friend in Wilmington, Delaware, and later published in the Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine (Philadelphia), Sept. 1790.

later action was bound to result. So we can scarcely say that Franklin's academy was the powerful force which spread the teaching of composition in America. Nevertheless, that does not detract from the credit due him for the earliest introduction of composition teaching into the curriculum of a secondary school.

New Jersey

In point of time, New Jersey stands second to Pennsylvania in the introduction of composition.

Professor Lyman¹ suggests that New Jersey might have established an academy modeled on Franklin's in self-defense, experiencing, as Maryland did, an exodus of students into Philadelphia. Certainly the establishment of a school in Princetown in 1763, offering a curriculum almost identical with that of Franklin's academy would support that idea:

The Publick is hereby notified, that as soon as a competent Number of Scholars, offer themselves, an English School will be opened, under the Inspection of the President of New-Jersey College, and as an Appendage to the same; in which is proposed to be taught the English Language grammatically, and that the Boys, when found capable, be exercised in Compositions, as

1. Op. cit., 52.

well as in pronouncing Orations publickly: Also, Writing, Arithmetick, and the practical Branches of the Mathematicks...¹

S. Finley, President of the College

Evidently a sufficient number of scholars appeared, for a later notice tells us that the school was opened by Mr. Joseph Periam, "a son of this college."²

Other schools offered similar work, perhaps in imitation of the Prince-town academy. The academy at Elizabeth-town, which in 1769 elected Mr. Periam to replace Mr. Reeves, advertised that some pupils will be employed

in transcribing fairly, from approved authors ... letters to acquire a taste for the epistolary style ... Those of riper judgments will be required to write their own thoughts in the form of letters, descriptions, &c. These transcripts and compositions will be carefully reviewed, and errors pointed out in such manner as will be most likely to make them accurate in writing and spelling.³

That composition work was considered important is further evidenced by an announcement in 1772:

At the quarterly Visitations, besides an examination in the Languages, the Boys exhibit Specimens of their Improvement in Writing; and also in Epistolary Composition, in which they are duly instructed, particular as to Orthography, Punctuation, &c. Acquirements in which too many grown Scholars are notoriously deficient. And to excite an Emulation of excelling in these useful Accomplishments, small Premiums are distributed quarterly to the best Performers.⁴

1. N.J. Arch., ser. 1, XXIV, 265-66.

2. Ibid., 370.

3. Ibid., ser. 1, XXVI, 473-75.

4. Ibid., ser. 1, XXVIII, 7.

At Raritan, in Somerset County, a grammar school was opened in 1778 under the supervision of the faculty of Queen's College. The announcement that particular attention will be given to instruct the youth in writing and reading the English language with propriety¹ suggests composition teaching, though it may mean merely grammar, as defined by Lindley Murray. However, the common practice in the newspaper announcements of designating grammar as such leads one to expect something more in this instance.

It is significant that two of the New Jersey academies to introduce composition were sponsored by colleges, and a third was taught by a graduate of one of these colleges. Apparently the higher institutions of learning were beginning to see the necessity for some preparation beyond that in the classics and arithmetic. Princeton, which in the latter part of the 19th century was to be the first college to make composition an entrance requirement was in 1778 using its influence to bring about better training in English:

For several years past great pains have been taken at Princeton to recommend and introduce an accurate knowledge of the English language. An attention to this also is requested of the teachers of Grammar schools, who, if they possess such knowledge themselves, may easily communicate it by occasional extemporary remarks on the idiom of the language in translating from Greek

1. *Ibid.*, ser. 2, II, 240.

and Latin, and by periodical exercises in reading, spelling, writing, and pronouncing orations, but above all by competition in such exercises on public days.¹

An interesting example of the varied practice which obtained in regard to composition teaching is afforded by an account of two New Jersey schools in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Nathan Hedges, the writer, was the president of the convention which formed the New Jersey State Teachers' Association.

In 1807 I became a pupil in the "New Warren Academy" in Morristown, then under the direction of James Stevenson, a Scotchman. He was a scholar and a kind and Christian gentleman. The school was both English and classical, and may be justly regarded as a favorable type of the best schools of that day.

In the English department, the simplest elementary branches received but little attention.

Writing was well taught by an accomplished master.

Arithmetic was taught from Dilworth, a book making no allusion to a decimal currency, and having little or no adaptation to the ordinary requirements of business. If we reached the "Rule of Three" we were quite gratified with our attainments ...

Reading was taught mechanically.

English Grammar could hardly be said to be taught in this school. I doubt whether the teacher in the English Department knew anything about it. I procured "Murray's Abridgment" and committed it several times over, but was not taught any of the mystery of parsing...

Geography was not taught. I think there was neither book, map, nor globe in the school.

Book-keeping. — This was a branch taught at the academy by a master who was a good book-keeper, but had no proper ideas of teaching ...

1. Ibid., ser. 2, II, 437. From the New-Jersey Gazette, Sept. 16, 1778.

Such I believe is a just view of the best English school existing at that time in that part of New Jersey. History, Geometry, Higher Mathematics, and numerous other branches now successfully taught, had no place in our scanty curriculum.¹

Nor was the situation improved when he was promoted to the classical department where he committed to memory the Latin instead of the English grammar. In 1810 he entered another academy in Morristown, conducted by Wm. A. Whelpley, a graduate of Yale. Here the course was much the same, with one notable exception, "Composition and declamation were well taught."²

New York

New York State, too, can claim the introduction of composition before the Revolution. Thomas Byerley³ in a newspaper advertisement (1773) of his English Grammar School in New York City outlines a five year course of study. He begins with reading, "to form a just pronunciation." In the second year he initiates the student into grammar, seasoning the course liberally with parsing. Syntax and ellipsis, together

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1. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XVI (Dec. 1866), 739.
 2. Ibid., 741.
 3. Byerley was the author of A Plain and Easy Introduction to English Grammar (1773), the second grammar written by an American and published in this country. See Lyman, op.cit., 129.

with the reading of books having a "moral Tendency", engage the students' attention in the third year. The fourth and fifth years are given over respectively to a "proper and elegant Method of reading" prose and poetry. Almost as an afterthought comes the announcement, "The Scholars of the fourth and fifth classes will be occasionally instructed in the Art of familiar Letter writing."¹ Again, in 1774, there appeared an announcement of the same school over the signatures of Thomas Byerley and Josiah Day. This time the subject of composition received more attention:

THE ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION, as far as they regard the ordinary purposes of life, including the use of the Ellipsis and Transposition; instructions to avoid Tautology, and a mean or improper diction; with some general instructions for the attaining of a pure and elegant STYLE.²

Later in the same year, J. and M. Tanner advertised letter-writing as part of the work in penmanship:

Writing ... in which branch, epistolary correspondence (that very essential, tho' much neglected part of female education) will be introduced, as an established part of their exercises.³

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1. Byerley's advertisement in N.Y.G. and W.M., Aug. 23, 1773. Ibid., 130.
 2. Seybolt, Source Studies in American Colonial Education. The Private School, 97. Notice from Rivington's New York Gazetteer, or Conn., Hudson Riv., N.J., and Quebec Weekly Advertiser, Feb. 24, Mar. 3, 10, 1774.
 3. Ibid., 72. Notice from Rivington's New York Gazetteer ... , Feb. 24, Mar. 3, Apr. 7, 14, 1774.

Perhaps an even earlier introduction of composition may be claimed if we give a liberal interpretation to Hugh Hughes' advertisement (1771) of his English Grammar and General School, a prominent school in New York. According to Hughes' plan, the student is to be "taught to parse disjunctively, then modally", and to correct false orthography and syntax.

A General Knowledge of all which, joined to Practice, will enable Youth to avoid the many orthographical Errors, Barbarisms, inelegant Repetitions, and manifest Solecisms, which they are otherwise liable to run into, and in Time, which render them Masters of an easy, Elegant Style, by which they will become capable of conveying their Sentiments with Clearness and Precision, in a concise and agreeable Manner, as well with Reputation to themselves as Delight to their Friends.¹

The "Practice" he has in mind may be merely in syntax, of which he describes various exercises, though it is evident that his aim is proficiency in composition.

Some idea of the extent of composition teaching in the early years of the 19th century is afforded by statistics gathered by the Board of Regents during the years 1804 to 1807. Table I shows the number of academies offering composition and the number of students studying it during the given years.²

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1. Advertisement in the N.Y.G. and W.P.B., Dec. 30, 1771, See Lyman, op. cit., 129.
 2. Based on a table given by Hough, Hist. and Statistical Records of the State of New York, 421.

Table I

Number of academies in New York State Offering Composition from 1804 - 1807

	No. of acad. reporting	No. offering Logic, Rhet., Composition, etc.	No. of Students
1804	11	8	101
1805	10	4	48
1806	20	4	38
1807	19	7	97

At least two of the four schools offering composition in 1805 were on Long Island. The Clinton Academy reported a charge of five dollars for "Logic, Rhetoric, and Composition."¹ The Oyster Bay Academy was a bit more reasonable, offering the same subjects for a dollar less.²

From 1818 on it is likely that more schools made an effort to include composition, for in that year an ordinance was passed defining more exactly the studies to be pursued in the classical and higher English courses if the academy wished to share in the money distributed from the income of the literary fund.³ The Regents declared that recipients of such aid must offer a course of "at least four months ... with exercises in composition and declamation at convenient and ordinary intervals."⁴

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1. Ibid., 414.
 2. Ibid., 419.
 3. Ibid., 448-49.
 4. Ibid., 449, footnote.

Connecticut

To Connecticut goes the honor of passing, in 1798, the first legislation mentioning composition.¹ Not until 1818, when the Regents of New York State passed their ordinance did that subject again figure in state legislation. It was apparently the general policy for the states to content themselves with laying down the broad outlines of the program, leaving the determination of the specific content to the schools. The law of 1798 is as follows:

Be it further enacted, That any School Society shall have liberty, by a vote of two thirds of the Inhabitants present in any legal Meeting warned for that purpose, to institute a School of a higher order, for the common benefit of all the Inhabitants, the object of which shall be to perfect the Youth admitted therein in Reading and Penmanship, to instruct them in the Rudiments of English Grammar, in Composition, in Arithmetic and Geography, or on particular desire, in the Latin and Greek languages, also in the first principles of Religion and Morality, and in general to form them for usefulness and happiness in the various relations of social life ...²

Ante-dating this legislation by two years is the regulation of the Farmington School Society, which

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1. Connecticut until early in the 19th century prided itself on its educated citizenry. Winterbotham, in 1796, gave the state high commendation when he wrote "In no part of the world is the education of all ranks of people more attended to than in Connecticut." See View of the United States of America, II, 271.
 2. Hertzler, The Rise of the Public High School in Connecticut, 226.

makes provision for a central school to accommodate those who have passed through the common school course.

The object of the school

shall be to perfect the youth admitted therein in reading and in the grammar of the English tongue, and to instruct them in geography, arithmetic, composition, and speaking.¹

That all schools obeyed the law of 1798 to the letter is doubtful. Since it applied only to public high schools and not to academies, the latter could do as they pleased. The course of study of the Episcopal Academy of Cheshire in 1801 makes no mention of composition, but the "English Language" is taught.² Again, the Bacon Academy, Colchester, in 1803 taught English grammar but failed to include composition.³ It may have been taught "throughout the course" in the incidental fashion typical of the early years of composition teaching, but since it is not mentioned, we can only conclude that it was neglected, or, at most, occupied a very insignificant place in the course of study.

That some of the schoolmasters were law abiding is proved by the following "Reminiscences of Female Education" by the Reverend William Woodbridge:

In 1779, two students of Yale College, during a long vacation, after the British troops invaded New

1. Hinsdale, Doc. Illus. of Amer. Ed. Hist., 1255.

2. Hertzer, op.cit., 20

3. Ibid., 20.

Haven, had each a class of young ladies, who were taught arithmetic, geography, composition, &c, for the term of one quarter.

One of these students (Rev. William Woodbridge), during his senior year in college, in the severe winter of 1779-80, kept a young ladies' school in New Haven, consisting of about twenty-five scholars, in which he taught grammar, geography, composition, and the elements of rhetoric.¹

The teaching of composition in Mr. Dwight's school at Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1790, has already been mentioned in connection with Franklin's influence.

At the Litchfield Academy, the first school in the country for the higher education of women,² composition occupied a prominent place. Lucy Sheldon's journal for 1803 furnishes evidence of the attention accorded it:

Thursday [Jan] 6th, Studied and recited a geography lesson and began a composition ...

Friday 7th, Attended school, finished my composition and heard the history summed up ...

Tuesday 11th, Heard the young Ladies read history and copied my composition ...

Saturday 22nd. Wrote a composition upon Vanity, and heard our faults told ...

Saturday [Mar] 26th. The preceding has been spent as usual in studying geography, hearing the history

1. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XVI (Mar. 1868), 138. Reprinted from the American Journal of Education for Sept. 1830 and the American Annals of Education for Nov. 1831.

2. Miss Sarah Pierce's school, established in 1792, was for many years the leading girls' school in the country. Girls came to it from all parts of the United States, from Canada, and even from the West Indies. See Vanderpoel, More Chronicles of a Pioneer School from 1792 to 1833, 7.

& painting, have written one composition & ciphered one evening ...

Saturday Apr. 9th, Have written a composition ...¹

Evidently a weekly composition was prescribed. In 1816 the requirement was still the same as the following entries in Caroline Chester's journal testify:

Saturday June 1st, 1816. Attended school Mr. Brace read the Dissertations on the advantages and disadvantages of war -- All of them were written particularly well but I am sure those Young Ladies who composed them must have felt unpleasantly to have them read aloud --²

Sunday June 9th, 1816. Saturday attended school and heard the Dissertations read. "On good humour" They were as usual written very well, it is I will own very gratifying to hear Dissertations read but I will own that it is not a pleasure to write them especially when you cannot THINK --³

That composition writing was no insignificant part of the curriculum is seen in Mary Chester's letter (May 29, 1819) to her brother:

I have had the unspeakable joy of hearing my composition read in school this morning. It being among the first that had been read since I have been here you will doubtless think I was all tiptoe about it ... My time is wholly taken up. I have to keep a journal and write compositions which with other studies occupy all the time of a moderate genius. Thursdays we have a rare fuss parsing ... I have to write a dissertation next week on the advantages of commerce. I wish you would send me your sentiments upon it.⁴

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1. Vanderpoel, Chronicles of a Pioneer School from 1792 to 1833, 50-51, 53.
 2. Vanderpoel, More Chronicles, 169.
 3. Ibid., 173.
 4. Vanderpoel, Chronicles of a Pioneer School from 1792 to 1833, 190.

Miss Sarah Pierce's school was a pioneer not only in female education, but also in composition teaching, for the place accorded the subject was certainly not the incidental one it held in the majority of schools.

Massachusetts

An early introduction of composition in Massachusetts, which had from the very beginning prided itself on its classical education is scarcely to be expected. Least of all will we hope to find it in Boston, dominated as it was by the Latin School. A clergyman writing of his studies in the Boston Latin School just before the Revolution says, "In the sixth year I began Greek, and for the first time attempted English composition, by translating Caesar's Commentaries."¹

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1. Com. Sch. Jour., XII (Oct. 1, 1850) 311-12. Also in Barnard's American Journal of Education, XIII (Dec. 1863), 745-746. The entire article is interesting as a first-hand account of the course of study just before the Revolution: "At the age of six and half years, I was sent to Master John Lovell's Latin school. The only requirement was reading well; but, though fully qualified, I was sent away to Master Griffith, a private teacher, to learn to read, write and spell. I learned the English Grammar in Dilworth's Spelling Book by heart. Griffith traced letters with a pencil, and the pupils inked them.

Entered Lovell's School at seven years ... We
(Note continued on page 49)

After the Revolution there was a reorganization of the Boston schools (1789), the Latin Grammar School remaining the center of the system. There were added, however, three reading and three writing schools, in which both boys and girls were to be taught to "spell, accent,

1. (Note continued from page 48)

studied Latin from 8 o'clock till 11, and from 1 till dark. After one or two years, I went to the town school, to Master Holbrook, at the corner of West Street, to learn to write; and to Master Proctor, on Pemberton's Hill, in the S.E. part of Scollay's Building. My second, third, and fourth year, I wrote there, and did nothing else...

The course of study was, grammar; Esop, with a translation; Clarke's Introduction to writing Latin; Eutropius, with a translation; Corderius; Ovid's Metamorphoses; Virgil's Georgics; Aeneid; Caesar; Cicero. In the sixth year I began Greek, and for the first time attempted English composition, by translating Caesar's Commentaries. The master allowed us to read poetical translations, such as Trappe's and Dyrden's Virgil. I was half way through Virgil when I began Greek with Ward's Greek Grammar.

After Cheever's Latin Accidence, we took Ward's Lily's Latin Grammar. After the Greek Grammar, we read the Greek Testament, and were allowed to use Beza's Latin Translation. Then came Homer's Iliad, five or six books, using Clarke's translation with notes, and this was all my Greek education at school. Then we took Horace, and composed Latin verses, using the Gradus ad Parnassum...

The last two years of my school life, nobody taught English Grammar or Geography, but Col. Joseph Ward, (son of Deacon Joseph Ward, of Newton, West Parish, Blacksmith,) who was self-taught, and set up a school in Boston. He became Aid to General Ward when the war commenced, and did not teach after the war.

... At Master Proctor's school reading and writing were taught in the same room, to girls and boys, from 7 to 14 years of age, and the Bible was the only reading book. Dilworth's Spelling Book was used, and New England Primer. The master set sums in our MSS. but did not go farther than the Rule of Three ..."

and read both prose and poetry, and also be instructed in English Grammar and Composition."¹ Furthermore, it was ordered that "the upper class in the Reading Schools be instructed in Epistolary Writing and other Composition."²

Winterbotham in that record of his American observations, View of the United States of America (1796), reported seven schools in operation in Boston. The Latin Grammar School, limited to boys, had the usual classical curriculum. But

In the three English grammar schools, the children of both sexes, from seven to fourteen years of age, are instructed in spelling, accenting and reading the English language, both prose and verse, with propriety, also in English grammar and composition, together with the rudiments of geography ...³

These are evidently the three reading schools referred to above.

The town of Salem in 1801 prescribed the teaching of composition:

Notice is published, that writing, arithmetic, English grammar, composition, and geography are to be taught in the grammar school, besides Latin and Greek.⁴

In 1815 the head of Woburn Academy advertised

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1. Jenks, Catalogue of the Boston Latin School, 286.
 2. Ibid., 288.
 3. Op. cit., II, 177.
 4. Felt, Annals of Salem. Quoted by Swett, American Public Schools, 14.

as follows:

It is his humble and pleasing object to instruct young Lads in a regular and genteel behaviour, and in the various branches of literature, viz: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Bookkeeping, English Grammar, Rhetoric, Composition, and the Latin and Greek Languages. Likewise -- Astronomy, Navigation or Surveying, to such as may wish to acquire a knowledge in either of these branches...¹

These few scattered references show that composition was making its way into the curriculum. But the teaching of the subject was certainly not universal, and even in those schools where it was required, it was often neglected. William B. Fowle, editor of the Common School Journal of Massachusetts from 1839 to 1852, frequently called attention to the lack of composition teaching. Speaking of his own education about 1800, he said:

We were educated at one of the best schools in one of the most celebrated towns in Massachusetts; but ... although we studied English Grammar seven years, and received a silver medal for our proficiency, we never wrote a sentence of English at school, and never did any thing which implied a suspicion on our part that grammar had anything to do with writing or conversation.²

The Boston school regulation of 1789 requiring masters

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1. The Columbian Centinel, March 11, 1815. See Grizzell, Origin and Development of the High School, 33.
 2. Common School Journal, XI (Sept. 1849) 258. The school he refers to is probably one of the grammar schools of Boston, for in a later editorial signed Wallis (evidently Fowle) he tells of studying English grammar for seven years in a grammar school in Boston. After two or three years spent memorizing, he was promoted to parsing. "During the six (?) years that we studied (Note continued on page 52).

to teach "spelling, accent, and the reading of prose and verse, and to instruct the children in English grammar, epistolary writing and composition" was entirely neglected.¹ "The probability is that, for twenty years, not a newspaper was read in any school, nor a word written."²

New Hampshire

An English visitor³ to Exeter during Washington's second presidential term reported that composition was being taught there. The course of study for 1818 accords it a place not only in the English, but also in the classical department. The latter practice is rather unusual, for even after composition teaching became more firmly established, the subject was frequently omitted from the classical curriculum. Exeter offered it to students of Latin and Greek in the third year only, but to English students in both the

2. (Note continued from page 51)
grammar in this way, we were never required to write a sentence of English, and we never did write one, as a school exercise, though our grammar masters were all educated at college." Ibid., XII (Jan. 1, 1850), 5.

1. "Memoir of Caleb Bingham", Barnard's American Journal of Education, V (Sept. 1858), 333.

2. Ibid.

3. Winterbotham, op. cit., II, 120.

second and third years.¹ Schoolmasters felt that the classical course was too crowded to permit the introduction of any subjects not required for college entrance. They maintained, too, that translation offered ample training in English composition.

Rhode Island

The first mention of composition is found in an announcement² of Kent (later East Greenwich) Academy in 1808. No formal course of study is given, but tuition rates are listed as follows:

Reading and spelling	\$2.00
Reading, writing and spelling	2.25
Arithmetic with book-keeping	2.50
English Grammar	3.00
Composition and speaking	3.00
Latin and Greek languages	3.00
Principles of astronomy and geography with the use of globes	3.50

Maine

In Maine composition teaching was evidently not established until a late date. One teacher encountered considerable opposition when he sought to introduce it in a common school in 1815. He met "a storm of

1. Brown, op. cit., 237-38.

2. Tolman, History of Higher Education in Rhode Island, 60.

protests from parents and pupils."¹

Delaware

In 1786 the trustees of the Wilmington Academy adopted regulations which included provision for Latin and English essays. The prescription that the "higher English Classics must be frequently employed in exercises and composition,"² although a common practice a century later, was unusual at that time.

Virginia

The early introduction of composition into Virginia is highly improbable. The curriculum of the Liberty Hall Academy (established in 1776), out of which grew Washington and Lee University, no doubt mirrors the situation in most of the academies of the time:

The scale of studies in the grammar school began at the end of the four fundamental rules of arithmetic and ended with Virgil. But little attention was bestowed upon the English language.³

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1. The teacher was the Reverend Samuel Hall, a pioneer in teacher training. He opened a private school for the training of teachers in Concord, Vt., in 1823. See Swett, *op. cit.*, 77.
 2. Powell, History of Education in Delaware, 46.
 3. Morrison, Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, 1776-1860, 107. Quoted from Washington and Lee Historical Papers, I, 38; IV, 25, 27.

When the subject was not entirely omitted it appeared linked with speech training as in Shepherdstown Academy where, according to the announcement of the new academy in 1813, "composition and elocution"¹ were to be taught.

North Carolina

There is no evidence to show that composition teaching was very popular in North Carolina before 1800. The autobiography of Dr. Charles Caldwell, founder of the Medical School at Louisville, however, proves that at least one teacher included it in his course as early as 1784.²

The documents collected by C.L.Coon in his North Carolina Schools and Academies contain no reference

1. Ibid., 125.

2. "Early in my twelfth year I commenced the study of the ancient languages. Here again I led, in part, the life of a forester. The school-house, to which I daily repaired, was a log cabin (the logs of it unhewn) situated in a densely wooded plain, upward of two miles distant from my father's dwelling. And my Dominie (so every teacher of Greek and Latin was then denominated) was, in some respects, of a piece with the building in which he presided ... To me he was extremely kind and attentive, took boundless pains in my instruction, and, in no great length of time, taught me as much of Latin and Greek, English composition, and the art of speaking (alias declamation) as he knew himself." See Barnard's American Journal of Education, Mar. 1866, XVI, 111-12.

to composition prior to 1807. During the decade 1800-1809, approximately twenty per cent of the courses of study mention composition; while between 1810 and 1819, about twenty-five per cent include it.¹

As early as 1801, the boys of the Fayetteville Academy were examined in letter writing, the only form of composition mentioned.² In 1803 two classes of boys were examined,³ and in 1804 a class of girls was tested in letter writing.⁴ The boys were evidently too busy that year with Vergil, Horace, Sallust, and Caesar to pay attention to epistolary writing.

In 1807 a correspondent of the Raleigh Minerva, signing himself Philomathes, championed the teaching of the English language. He wrote,

But after all, too much attention cannot be paid to our own language; to its pronunciation and grammatical construction ... I would also recommend that the practice of composition and letter-writing, a knowledge of history, and particularly the delivery

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1. That does not necessarily mean that 20 or 25% of all the schools taught it. Many schools mentioned gave no list of courses and, therefore, could not be included in the reckoning. It is significant, however, that there is a gradual increase in the number of schools mentioning composition. In the decade 1820-1829, the number had risen to approximately 35%; 1830-1839, to about 40%.
 2. Coon, op. cit., 61. Ral. Reg., July 28, 1801.
 3. Ibid., 62. Ral. Reg., Aug. 1, 1803.
 4. Ibid., 64. Ral. Reg., July 26, 1804.

of speeches, should be interwoven throughout the whole course of study.¹

The announcement of the Salisbury Academy for 1807 makes no mention of composition, but in the report of the examination held December 10, 1807, we read,

In Writing and Composition: All the young gentlemen exhibited samples of their performance. In most of them, the trustees perceiving germs of opening genius and eloquence, which, they fondly hope, will in due time adorn and enrich our land with the noblest fruits of virtue and learning.²

Similarly, the Raleigh Academy announcements for the years 1800, 1804, 1806, and 1807, omit mention of composition, yet in the examination of November 1807, several pupils in both the male and female departments exhibited compositions.³ However, notice was given that in 1808

Particular attention will be paid to the Morals of Students sent to this Academy, and no pains spared to make them excel in Oratory, a knowledge of History, Composition, &c.⁴

In the same year a class of girls was examined in composition.⁵ Mordecai's Female Seminary in Warrenton

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1. Ibid., 759. Dec. 10, 1807.
 2. Ibid., 347. Ral. Minerva, Dec. 24, 1807.
 3. Ibid., 406. Ral. Reg., Nov. 26, 1807.
 4. Ibid., 407. Ral. Min., Nov. 26, 1807.
 5. Ibid., 414. The Minerva, Raleigh, Nov. 3, 1808.

advertised in 1808 that composition would be taught,¹ and at the examination in July 1809, were displayed "compositions of four Young Ladies who had written upon subjects adapted to the occasion."² Again in December 1809, the "Compositions of three Young Ladies ... were read."³

In the next decade only one other school had joined the ranks of those mentioned above.⁴ That was the Williamsborough Academy, which, under the principalship of Professor Andrew Rhea, professor of languages in the University of North Carolina, pledged itself that "Particular attention will be paid to Composition, Reading and Elocution."⁵

From these data it is apparent that North

1. Ibid., 595. Ral. Reg., Aug. 25, 1808.

2. Ibid., 596. Ral. Reg., July 6, 1809.

3. Ibid., 597. Ral. Star, Dec. 28, 1809.

4. The following announcements mentioning composition appeared in the second decade of the 19th century.

See Coon, op. cit.

Raleigh Academy:

p. 420. "It was particularly pleasing to the Trustees to observe, that a defect which they had noticed at the last Examination, in relation to the cultivation, amongst the higher Students especially, of a correct and perfect acquaintance with the American Language, had, in a great degree been removed, as was clearly evinced in the Grammar Exercises, Compositions and Public Speaking of the Young Men. Several of these Compositions and Oration were such as did honor to the Institution." Report of the examination, Nov. 1810. Ral. Reg., Nov. 22, 1810.

p. 421. "English Composition in the four last" (Note continued on page 58).

Carolina was rather slow to introduce composition. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, however, it did become firmly established in a few of the more progressive schools of the state.¹

(Notes continued from page 59)

4. classes of the six year course for girls. Ral. Reg., Jan. 24, 1811.
 Mordecai's Female Seminary at Warrenton:
 p. 598. "The Compositions of the young Ladies ... were read, and very generally approved."
 Report of examination, Dec. 1810. The Star, Jan. 3, 1811.
 p. 600. Compositions of students "were read to the audience by Judge Taylor." The Star, July 19, 1811.
 p. 601. The young ladies "manifested an extensive knowledge of ... the useful branches of Astronomy and Composition." Ral. Star, Jan. 10, 1812.
 p. 602-3. Composition included in the examination of July and December, 1812. The Star, July and Dec., 1812.
 p. 603. Composition announced in the course of study. Ral. Star, Jan. 6, 1815.
5. Ibid., 124. Ral. Star, Jan. 6, 1815.

(Note to page 59)

1. Winterbotham gives very favorable mention of two of the academies which are listed above as teaching composition: "There is a very good academy at Warrenton; ... another at Williamsborough in Granville ... of considerable note." Op. cit., III, 214.

Textbooks

The American Annals of Education and Instruction for July, 1832,¹ contain the statement that according to a catalog professing to list all the school books published in the United States before 1804, there was only one composition book extant, Caleb Bingham's Juvenile Letters. In Barnard's list of American textbooks² it appears under the date 1799, probably the date of the first edition. The second edition appeared in 1803. The book is scarcely a composition text in the usual sense, for it contains a series of letters designed to help children with their correspondence. The letters, written by such model children as Timothy Thinkwell, James Meanwell, Samuel Thoughtful, and Rebecca Learner, fairly shriek their morals at the reader.

Bingham's book may have been the only American printed composition text in use; however, there were two books published in England that were known in the United States before 1820. John Walker, editor of a widely used dictionary, was also the author of The Teacher's Assistant in English Composition, the first edition of

1. Vol. II, 373.

2. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XIII (Mar. 1863), section following p. 208.

which appeared in 1801, followed by a second edition in 1802. The book was evidently popular, for in 1808, an edition printed in Carlisle appeared. Whether there were other editions between those of 1802 and 1808 the writer has been unable to discover. There is no conclusive evidence to show that the book was used in American schools before 1832 when Woodbridge, editor of the American Annals, included it in a list of composition books then extant.¹ However, it is unlikely that a book as popular as Walker's would have taken over thirty years to become known on the other side of the Atlantic. R.G.Parker, author of Progressive Exercises in English Composition (1832), acknowledged² that he had found some hints for his book in The Teacher's Assistant.

The second English publication to find favor in connection with composition teaching in American schools was The Elements of Composition by David Irving. It was advertised by Joseph Gales, bookseller, in the Raleigh Register as early as 1806.³ The fifth edition appeared in 1821. Despite its title, it is not a composition text, at least not from the practical standpoint. It is rather a rhetoric of the most formal type given

1. American Annals of Education and Inst., II (July, 1832), 377.

2. See Parker, op.cit. (edition of 1840), preface, IV. The preface is reprinted from the edition of 1832.

3. Coon, op. cit., 775.

over to a discussion of the elements of prose style with illustrations and criticisms. In many of the schools which included Elements of Composition in their course of study, the composition work probably never progressed beyond memorization of the principles set forth in Irving.

Aids to the teacher of composition before 1820, therefore, were very meagre. Only three books have been found, one of which is doubtfully assigned to that period. The other two furnished very little aid, since one was given over entirely to lectures on rhetoric, the other to model letters exceedingly didactic in tone.

Summary

The introduction of composition was coincident with the establishment of the academy in America. At exactly the midpoint of the 18th century, Franklin, influenced by the theories of Locke, Turnbull, Milton, and others, dedicated his Philadelphia Academy to an English education for youth. Unfortunately, his dream was never completely realized, for the English school was rapidly overshadowed by the classical department of the academy. However, the idea was not completely lost,

and we find schools in the neighboring state of New Jersey, as early as 1763, including composition in the curriculum, in imitation, perhaps, of Franklin's course of study. Ten years later there is evidence of composition being taught in New York State.

It was not until after the Revolution that the more conservative New England States recognized the new subject. Boston took the lead in 1789 with its school reorganization. But even then composition failed to get into that classical stronghold, the Latin School, where students were too busy being prepared for college to find time for the English language. So composition was relegated to the reading and writing schools. Except in Connecticut, the teaching of composition made very little progress in the other New England States from 1750 to 1820. In North Carolina the subject made little headway until 1800, when it was gradually introduced into the private schools. By 1820 one quarter of them reported attention to composition.

In two states before 1820 composition was the subject of legislation, Connecticut taking the lead in 1789 by requiring instruction in composition in schools "of a higher order". New York State in 1818 placed a premium on the teaching of composition, for it

denied schools a share in the literary fund unless that subject was included.

Another force, later to become a powerful influence in the development of composition teaching, made itself felt very early in New Jersey. The colleges there assumed the leadership in the encouragement of composition teaching by including it in the curricula of schools they sponsored and by openly urging attention to it in the grammar schools of the state.

By 1820, composition had gained a foothold, but it was not a very secure one. In the few schools which did include mention of it, the teaching was likely to be incidental, and in many places the study was entirely neglected because of the pressure of college entrance subjects. Furthermore, actual practice in composition was not considered so important, since it was thought that proficiency in writing could be attained through memorization of the rules of grammar. The dearth of textbooks in composition before 1820 is significant of the small regard in which that subject was held.

CHAPTER III
THE EXTENSION OF COMPOSITION TEACHING
1820-1900

Composition, originally brought into the curriculum because it was "useful", was assured a permanent place in the course of study by the growing utilitarianism of the American nation after the Revolution. The economic revolution consequent upon the War of 1812 began the transformation of a nation of farmers into a nation of shopkeepers who demanded for their children an education that would function in the practical affairs of life. The Latin grammar schools were too narrowly propaedeutic; the academies although offering a broader education were too far away from home. The new middle class demanded for its children the opportunity of preparation for the activities of life without the inconvenience and expense of leaving home. And so the high school was established.

An examination of the aims of the early high schools shows the practical purposes of their founders. In 1820, the Boston School Committee considered the advisability of establishing a seminary to provide young men who are not intended for a collegiate course of studies, and who have enjoyed the usual advantages of the public schools, with the means of completing a

good English education, and of fitting themselves for all the departments of commercial life.¹

As a result of their deliberations, the first high school, originally called the English Classical School, was opened in 1821. Equally utilitarian were the aims of the high schools which sprang up in imitation of the Boston institution. The High School Society of New York City, which in 1825 had opened a high school, reported at the end of the first year,

It should never be forgotten, that the grand object of the institution is to prepare the boys for such advancement and such pursuits in life, as they are destined to after leaving it ... Many who leave it expect to enter immediately upon the active business of life.²

Some of the schools were even more ambitious, offering in addition preparation for college. Plymouth³

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1. Edmands, English High School Semi-Centennial Anniversary, 1871, 76. Quoted by Grizzell, Origin and Development of the High School in New England before 1865, 42.
 2. Brown, The Making of Our Middle Schools, 306-7.
The aim of the Medford, Mass., school was "to qualify every scholar who desires, for the active duties of life." See Grizzell, Origin and Development of the High School in New England before 1865, 82-83.
The high school at Bridgeport, Conn., founded in 1827 on the general plan of the New York High School, aimed "to prepare youth for the active pursuits of future life." See Hertzler, The Rise of the Public High School in Connecticut, 22.
The school committee of Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1851, expected "the high schools to take the lead in the practical education of the town." From the Fourteenth Annual Report of the [Massachusetts] Board of Education (1851), app., 70.
 3. [Town] Records (MS), IV, 521 (Apr. 29, 1826). Quoted by Grizzell, op. cit., 278.

predicated such a dual aim in the establishment of its high school (1826 or 1827). Likewise the school committee of Lowell in 1840 reported that the object of its high school was to provide classical training as well as to give "instruction for any branch of active business."¹

The teaching of composition received a fresh stimulus with the establishment of the high school. In the course of study for the Boston High School, composition instead of merely being mentioned in a footnote headed the list of studies for each of the three years.² The High School for Boys in New York included composition as one of the subjects "common to all."³

The older subjects were so firmly entrenched in the curriculum that it was difficult for a newcomer like composition to receive its just due. But it was not without its champions who continued unceasingly to urge the importance of the mother tongue. Like Locke, Sheridan, and Turnbull of an earlier day, they decried the attention given to classical training at the expense of the more immediately useful study of the

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1. Grizzell, op. cit., 78.
 2. Brown, op. cit., 300-301.
 3. First Annual Report of the High-School Society, 6-7.
See Brown, op. cit., 307.

native tongue. One advocate of the English language, commenting on Prize Book, No. VI, of the Boston Latin School, expressed himself as follows:

The English part of the Prize Book shows much judgement and taste, and a good deal of practical skill in composing; and we trust that whatever influence on other schools the Latin department may exert -- this will not fail to turn the attention of instructors [sic] more forcibly than heretofore to the important branch of English composition. The writing and speaking of our own language, we are glad to see attended to at all hazards, and to find them so successfully cultivated in a school where the ancient languages are the chief objects of attention. But if there is any beneficial improvement practicable and urgent in the arrangements of this ancient and respectable institution, as well as of preparatory schools generally, throughout the country, -- it is that of drawing out the cultivation of English rhetoric into a distinct department of instruction, instead of merely leaving it the scraps of time and attention which can be afforded to it at intervals.

If the literature or the eloquence of America, is ever to be what it ought to be -- what it can be -- the English language, if not placed, (as it should be,) above Greek and Latin, must at least be raised so as not to be comparatively on a footing of charity, or perhaps of contempt and neglect.¹

In England, too, similar protests were being voiced, and because they were deemed applicable in this country, found their way into American journals. "What avails a proficiency in writing Latin prose and Greek verse, if accompanied, (and accompanied it often is and has been,) with the want of correctness, per-

1. American Journal of Education (Russell's), I (Nov. 1826), 703-4.

spicuity, ease, and fluency in English composition?"¹ is the plaint of one graduate of English institutions. He does not believe that a knowledge of the classical language will enable one to write good English. Thorough study and constant practice are needed for mastery of the mother tongue. Another English writer² inveighs against the domination of the curriculum by the subjects of the monastic ages, which fail to prepare the child for the life he must lead. He is kept busy enough in school, but later on when he gets out into life, he finds he must first master those things that he should have learned while he was acquiring Latin and Greek.

The growing practicality of the American mind is reflected in the arguments of another opponent of the Greek and Latin monopoly. He is unwilling to wait for gradual reformation, but demands immediate and direct action:

If we are indeed convinced that our standard of instruction is ill adapted to actual use, there should be no reserve about the introducing of reformation. Usage, how venerable soever by antiquity, should at once give place to the demands of present utility.³

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1. Ibid., I (Dec. 1826), 717.
 2. American Journal of Education (Russell's), II (Jan. 1827), 74-89.
 3. Ibid., 7.

From Europe there came reports of educational procedures which indicated that the new demands for the mother tongue in America were matters of actual practice in the countries across the Atlantic. American educators, sent abroad to observe, brought back tidings of the importance attached to the teaching of the vernacular in foreign lands. One of these visitors, Calvin E. Stowe, in 1836 went to Europe to examine for the state of Ohio the public school system of Germany. He reported,

The knowledge of the native tongue; the ability to use it with correctness, facility, and power ... is justly regarded as one of the most important branches of common school instruction.¹

The study of the vernacular he found to be constant and gradual, composition work being introduced in the last two years of the eight year elementary course. At that time the students were not plunged suddenly into composition writing, but were given "exercises on such simple questions as -- 'Why ought children to love and obey their parents?'" , or they were asked to describe "visible objects, such as a house, a room, a garden, &c." Practice was given in expressing the same ideas in various ways and in the use of metaphors and

1. "Report on Elementary Public Instruction in Europe," in Knight, Reports on European Education, 288.

other figures of speech. The writing of friendly letters and "short essays on themes such as may be furnished by texts from the book of Proverbs" followed, "and thus gradual advancement ... [was] made to all the higher and graver modes of composition."¹

Alexander Dallas Bache, elected president of Girard College, went abroad for two years to study the educational systems of Europe. He visited the countries of western Europe, surveying all classes of education from the kindergarten to the university. The results of his observations were published in 1839 in his Report on Education in Europe. In the [redacted] schools he found only scant attention given to the vernacular. One exception to this practice was the St. Domingo-House School at Everton, near Liverpool.² For [redacted] principles, it postponed the study of the classics until the later years and preceded them by the teaching of the [redacted]. Composition was begun in the second year of a six year course. In Scotland³ he reported composition being taught in the Edinburgh Academy, the High School of Glasgow, and the Edinburgh Institution for Languages, Mathematics, etc.

1. Ibid., 303.

2. Bache, Report on Education in Europe, 402 ff.

3. Ibid., 368 ff.

Probably the most complete course of instruction in the native tongue was found in Germany.¹ In the Gymnasia, preparing for the universities, German was studied throughout the six years of the course, with constant attention to composition. In the Realschulen, preparing for higher occupations and for professions not ranking among the learned, the study of composition was not begun as early, nor were as many hours spent on it each week as in the gymnasia.

Horace Mann, in his Seventh Annual Report to the Board of Education in Massachusetts (1843), dealt mainly with his observations of primary education in Germany, but what he said of language teaching was equally pertinent to secondary schools. His plea was for less formal grammar and more practice. In German schools he heard little of the

ding-dong and recitative of gender, number and case, of government and agreement, which make up so great a portion of the grammatical exercises in our schools ... If the object of grammar is to teach children to speak and write their native language with propriety, then they should be practiced upon expressing their own ideas with elegance, distinctness, and force.²

The reports on language teaching in Germany were in agreement on the following points: the study

1. Ibid., 477-91.

2. Barnard's American Journal of Education, VIII (1860), 387-8.

was introduced early and was fairly constant throughout the course; the exercises were simple and informal, suited to the development of the child, and growing increasingly difficult as the child grew older. This system was in direct contrast with the American method according to which the child was suddenly at the beginning of his high school career catapulted into composition writing. Although the European methods were not directly imitated by American schoolmasters, "the stimulus of German excellence began to prick the American spirit of emulation."¹

The growth of educational periodicals in the first half of the nineteenth century is important, for they not only gave publicity to the reports on foreign education, but constantly championed the teaching of composition. They provided opportunity for the exchange of ideas and a comparison of methods used. Russell's American Journal of Education, first published in 1826, is one of the earliest of these. During its brief five years of life, there were not many articles on composition, but mention of it never failed to show the editor's conviction of the importance of the subject. In a very favorable review of Sheridan's British Education, he called attention to the neglect of the English

1. Brown, op. cit., 339.

language in American schools. Colleges, he said, included composition in the prospectus, but were you to inquire of the student, you would find he was required to do but little writing.¹ In the issue for May, 1830, the editor again urged the importance of composition on the ground that "the occasions which all have to express themselves in writing, and in a perspicuous, if not an elegant manner, are of every day recurrence." He could see few natural obstacles to the attainment of excellence in writing if the practice were begun early.

The painter's rule, "to pass no day without a line," might in a different sense be profitable in schools. Even a daily task in composition, would hardly interfere with more important lessons, but it seems an unpardonable neglect that the task should not occur even weekly.²

The American Journal of Education in 1830 combined with the American Annals of Education and Instruction under the editorship of William C. Woodbridge. The new editor, who had spent considerable time in Europe studying educational institutions there, devoted much space to a description of foreign practices. Occasional discussions of method in composition also appeared in the journal.

The Connecticut Common School Journal,

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1. American Journal of Education (Russell's), II (Apr. 1827), 245-50.
 2. Ibid., V (May 1830), 235.

established by Henry Barnard in 1838 as the official organ of the department of education of the state of Connecticut, contained frequent accounts of education in Germany and Switzerland.

The Common School Journal, first published in Boston in 1839 under Horace Mann's editorship, dealt primarily, as its name suggests, with common-school problems. The editor never neglected an opportunity to champion the cause of composition. In the June, 1845, issue, he gave his hearty endorsement to the opinion expressed by Mr. J.R. Boyd, principal of the Black River Literary and Religious Institute, New York, that too great prominence was given to the acquisition of ideas and too little to the expression of them. The chief reason for that was the fact that colleges required only examinations in Latin, Greek, and mathematics. As a remedy, he suggested giving to composition "equal prominence with other branches of study."¹

In 1865 Barnard began the publication of his American Journal of Education, which is more of an encyclopedia of American education than a journal. Frequent articles on foreign education came from Barnard's pen, based both on his own observations and on his reading. These articles he later collected and

1. Common School Journal, VII (June 1845), 191-2.

published in book form, German Schools and Teachers and National Education in Europe. A few discussions of composition appeared, usually lamenting the inadequacy of the teaching. "English Grammar is almost totally neglected, and composition is an art which one should suppose was entirely useless,"¹ is the complaint of Dr. Grimshaw, superintendent of schools of New Castle Co., Delaware. [REDACTED] who as editor of his own magazine had often emphasized the importance of composition, was a contributor to Barnard's periodical. Even as late as [REDACTED] he found it necessary to call attention to the neglect of composition. He wrote,

Ample time, comparatively is usually allowed for the study of the ancient languages, and even for that of some of the modern; but little is expressly assigned for the thorough acquisition of our own, which, to ensure to the student a perfect command of it, should be the groundword of daily exercises, thoughtfully planned and carefully executed, from the first steps in education onward to the last day of professional preparation for the business of life.²

It might be expected that composition teaching with the new impulse given it by the establishment of the high school would progress very rapidly, especially since it was sanctioned by foreign educational practice and championed in the pedagogical journals. In spite of these favorable factors, its development

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1. Barnard's American Journal of Education, II (Dec. 1856), 475.
 2. Ibid., III (June, 1857), 327.

was exceedingly slow. I [redacted]

and [redacted]

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[redacted]. From that time to the end of the century there was considerable agitation in its favor, and by 1900 it was considered an essential part of the English work.

Why should it have taken almost one hundred and fifty years from its introduction into Franklin's academy to find its place? Some of the reasons have already been touched upon in Chapter II. A knowledge of the rules of grammar was deemed adequate preparation for correct writing and speaking. As late as 1851 Gould Brown affirmed that the only way to acquire skill in the art of language is by thoroughly committing definitions and rules to memory, "that they may ever after be readily applied."¹ As long as language study was dominated by that idea, composition could have no very important place in the curriculum.

[redacted]

[redacted]

been devised for teaching composition. For a long time

the sole method, if such it may be called, was the

assignment of a topic and criticism by the teacher of

the finished product. In 1866, the Reverend Henry N.

1. Brown, Gould, The Institutes of English Grammar, v.

Day called attention to the problem:

How should composition be taught in our schools and seminaries, our academies and colleges? It is safe to say that in no other department of instruction is there equal deficiency and failure; in no other department is there equal ignorance of what a proper mode of teaching and learning is; in no other, is there equal dissatisfaction with results on the part of both teacher and pupil.¹

No great advance had been made toward the close of the century when Frank A. Hill, Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education reported, "Methods of teaching the classics and mathematics ... have been perfected through long experience; not so with the methods of teaching English, history and the sciences ... although in our best high schools excellent progress is making."² The problem of method was left for the 20th century to solve.

Another obstacle to the widespread introduction of composition instruction was the overcrowded curriculum. Many schools were attempting so much that composition with its added burden of correction was bound to be crowded out. The situation was particularly acute in the smaller communities where there was a demand for both preparatory and non-preparatory studies, and where

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1. Harvard's American Journal of Education, XVI (Mar., 1883), 641.
 2. Harris, Wm. T., "Education in the Several States." Report of the United States Commissioner of Education (1893-94), II, 1385.

the facilities at best were very limited. A high school inspector in Massachusetts reported in 1870,

I have not unfrequently found from forty to sixty and even more pupils pursuing the study of Greek, Latin, and French and all the 'ologies' and 'osophies' usually embraced in a High School course of study, and but a single person employed to teach (?) them all.¹

Usually the best work was done in the classical studies, and "it was very difficult to secure results in the non-preparatory branches."² Even in the larger schools where there was an adequate staff, composition was frequently made secondary to the older established subjects. The graduate of an academy in eastern New York reported as late as the 1890's that in his school "the sentiment seemed on the whole to be 'Do your Latin and Greek, your Algebra and Geometry, your French and German well, and then, if you have any time left, it might be well to write a little English.'³

Before 1870 it was perfectly safe to omit composition from the preparatory course because the colleges did not require it. But even after it was prescribed, schools did not hesitate to neglect it. Was

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1. 33rd Annual Report of the [Mass.] Board of Education (1870), app. 87.
 2. Lull, Inherited Tendencies of Secondary Instruction in the United States, 189.
 3. Harvard University, Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric, (1897), 448.

not English the mother tongue and should not every one be able to write what he had practiced speaking since childhood? As one graduate of a private school in Boston expressed it, the master "seemed to have had the idea that, all of his scholars being gentlemen, they knew the King's English."¹ The most important reason, however, for its neglect in the classical course was the conviction that composition was adequately taught through translation. The classicists argued that it afforded even better training than original composition since it enabled the youth to concentrate solely on the expression of ideas without the additional task of invention. In the school announcements translation regularly appeared as part of the composition training in the college preparatory course. The Round Hill School at Northampton, Massachusetts, explained that training in writing was given through "either translations or Original Compositions."² The Utica Academy (New York) required original compositions of all. "In addition to this, the classical students one day in each week, translate a chapter of Cicero or Greek reader into English. Latin compositions

1. Ibid., 459.

2. American Journal of Education (Russell's), I (July 1826), 438. Quoted from the Hamp. Gaz.

every morning."¹ Occasionally a schoolmaster raised his voice in opposition, contending that translation was more injurious than helpful, since it tended to Latinize the English language, but it remained for Harvard in the last decade of the 19th century to reveal the inadequacy of the translation method.²

Not until late in the nineteenth century did the realization become universal that neither translation nor sporadic efforts at original composition were affording effective training in the writing of English. That conviction was crystallized in the report of the Committee of Ten which gave composition an assured place in the high school curriculum.

COMPOSITION TEACHING IN REPRESENTATIVE STATES, 1820-1900

New England

Connecticut

Conditions were more favorable to the development of composition teaching in Connecticut than in most other states. First of all, not every state had a law like the ~~_____~~

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1. 51st Annual Report of the Regents (1838), 96.
 2. See Appendix A for specimens of "translation English".

and secondly, not every state had so vigorous an educational leader as Henry Barnard, Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools from 1838 to 1842 and Superintendent of Instruction from 1850 to 1855.

We can rightly expect that under these two influences composition teaching would have a rapid growth.

Although the academies were not subject to the law of 1798, some of them did teach composition, and at least one of them gave it more than passing attention. The Litchfield Academy had, as early as 1803,¹ required it. A record of the rules for 1821 indicates that one of the requirements for graduation was a "three months journal or eight dissertations."² In 1825, according to a copy of the rules made by a pupil,

You must write a letter to be corrected and sent home to your friends once in four weeks -- except excused. You must not write a careless note, or any careless writing. You must write a composition once in a fortnight, of 200 words. You must write at least 30 good lines in a week.³

1. See Chapter II, 46

2. Vanderpoel, Chronicles of a Pioneer School from 1792 to 1833..., 234. From Sarah Kingsbury's copy of the rules of the school.

3. Ibid., 256. From a copy made by Charlotte Phelps.

The various announcements of the school also include mention of composition. The notice of 1826 is as follows:

Writing, History, Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic, Rhetoric, and Composition, with plain Needlework, per Quarter \$5

The above, with Natural and Moral Philosophy, Logic, Chemistry, Mathematics, the Principals of
(Note continued on page 83)

In 1824 the New Haven Seminary in its First (or regular) Course, offered "Rhetoric and Composition", studies which were not continued in the Second (supplementary) Course. The prospectus of Mr. Emerson's Female Seminary at Wethersfield (1826) promised composition in all three years of the course. The third year class was to "receive special instruction in composition."² In 1827 Sereno E. Dwight and Henry E. Dwight planned to establish the New-Haven Gymnasium, "a school for the Education of Boys", in which all students, whether planning to go to college or not, were to be instructed in composition.³ The Hartford Female Seminary, according to notices in 1828⁴ and 1832,⁵

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3. (Note continued from page 82)
Taste and Criticism, with the Latin and Greek Languages, per Quarter \$6
Ibid., 259.

The trustees in their advertisement of 1828 list composition as one of the studies. Ibid., 264.

In 1833 the studies of the second department were advertised as "embracing History, Grammar, Arithmetic, and Composition \$8.75." Ibid., 310.

1. Grizzell, op. cit., 290-291.
2. American Journal of Education (Russell's), I (Aug. 1826), 507.
3. Ibid., III (Feb. 1828), 115-116.
4. Ibid., III (Aug. 1828), 464-465.
5. American Annals of Education, II (Jan. 1832), 65.

offered composition in all three years of the course. It was also included in the curriculum of the Ellington School for boys, in Ellington, 1833.¹ The Free Academy at Norwich² required during the first two years one recitation a week from a textbook, accompanied by short composition exercises in which the principles studied were applied. During the last two years more formal compositions were written every two weeks. These data indicate a wide diversity in the treatment of composition in the private schools, though, in general, the study received some attention throughout the course.

When Barnard became secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in 1838, he found very few graded schools in existence, although the law of 1798 had opened the way for the establishment of high schools. The district schools attempted to teach a large variety of subjects to pupils of all ages. In some of the larger districts composition was included, but many schools refused to teach it because the law required it only in schools of a higher order. Barnard was not at all in sympathy with this view and in his first report to the Board said,

1. Hertzler, op. cit., 20.

2. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XIX (1870), 508.

Composition, the expression of one's thoughts in clear and correct language, especially in its application to writing of familiar or business letters, ought not to be omitted.¹

In fact, he believed that

The mastery of the English language, combining spelling, reading, speaking, grammar and composition, should be the leading object of the district school, as far as intellectual education is concerned.²

In his plans for the gradation of schools, instruction in the English language was not neglected. In his Fourth Annual Report (1842), which contained a recommendation for a three-fold division, primary, intermediate, and high school, composition was specifically mentioned in the list of studies for the secondary school.³ Constant encouragement to the teaching of composition was given by the questionnaire covering the subjects taught in the common schools, sent out by Barnard as part of the Board's plan "to collect and disseminate information, to discover, devise, and recommend plans of improvement."⁴ Although ostensibly designed to furnish information, the questions were in reality suggestions of methods which teachers might employ. The section on composition is as follows:

1. Connecticut Common School Journal, I (May 1839), 169.
2. From his Third Annual Report as Secretary to the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools in Connecticut (1841). See Brubacher, Henry Barnard on Education, 156.
3. Barnard's American Journal of Education, Supplement to Vol. I (1855-56) 703.
4. Ibid., 673.

1. Do you classify your pupils in reference to teaching composition?
2. Do you accustom your youngest pupils to write or print words and short sentences on the slate, from your dictation?
3. Do you ask them to print or write something about what they have seen in coming to school, or read in the reading lesson?
4. As a preliminary exercise in composition, do you engage them in familiar talk about something they have seen in their walk, or has happened in or about the school? and when they have got ideas, and can clothe them orally in words, do you allow them as a privilege to write or print the same on the slate or paper?
5. Do you give out a number of words, and then ask your pupils to frame sentences in which those words are used?
6. Do you require your older pupils to keep a journal or give an account of the occurrences of the day, as an exercise in composition?
7. Do you instruct your pupils as to the most approved form of dating, commencing, and closing a letter?
8. Do you require your pupils to write a letter in answer to some supposed inquiries about some matter of fact?
9. Do you request your older pupils to write out what they can recollect of a sermon or lecture they have heard, or of a book they have been reading?
10. At what age do your pupils usually commence writing easy sentences or compositions?¹



Later, as superintendent of schools he required all members of the Teachers' Institute to fill out a blank giving information relative to their teaching.² One question concerned the number of classes in composition. He also furnished lists of suggested topics for

1. From Barnard's Fourth Annual Report. Ibid., 692.
 2. Connecticut Common School Journal, V (Sept. 1851), 28.

discussion at teachers' meetings, including among his subjects composition.¹ This constant emphasis on composition in the elementary schools not only encouraged its teaching in the secondary schools, but also simplified the task of the high school teachers, since the pupils who came to them already grounded in the fundamentals of writing would not have that dread of composition which haunted many pupils upon their entrance into the high school.

Although the public high schools were established to provide practical education and in accordance with that aim and in compliance with the law usually offered instruction in composition, the smaller ones frequently had a very limited curriculum. The Wethersfield High School, established in 1840, offered only spelling, reading, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and Latin, -- a curriculum which Hertzler² says is typical of the smaller high school in the years immediately following 1840.

The first permanent high school in the state, the Middletown City High School, established in 1840, included composition in the course of study, as shown

1. Ibid., 31.

2. Op. cit., 56-57.

by a weekly report card of October 13, 1840.¹ The Manuscript Minutes of the Board of Education for November 25, 1848, recorded composition for that year in both the male and female departments.² The Annual Catalogue of 1851 stated that "Spelling, Reading, Defining, Sub-Lectures, Composition, and Declamation are required through each term." In the second, or Middle Year, composition was specifically mentioned, Quackenbos being used as a text. In the third, or Senior Year, "Composition, Course of Essays", was offered.³ By 1865 the course had become a five year one, and "composition was attended to through the school." All courses, the General, Classical, and English had, in the first year, two recitations a week on Quackenbos' First Lessons in Composition.⁴ However, a report⁵ submitted to the State Department of Education in 1868, giving enrollment of students by subjects, failed to show any pupils in composition. It may have been that since it was a subject common to all and not taught in a separate course, the school did not consider it necessary to list the number of students.

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1. Ibid., 57.
 2. Ibid., 74.
 3. Ibid., 77.
 4. Ibid., 90-92.
 5. Ibid., 208.

The importance of composition had increased so considerably by 1847 that when Hartford opened a high school in that year, an entrance examination was prescribed in that subject.¹ By 1848, however, United States history had been substituted for it. The Rules and Regulations of the Public High School² included composition as a subject of instruction, but it was undoubtedly limited to the English department, for, whereas, Tower's Exercises and Parker's Composition (abridged) were listed as texts for that department, only Greek and Latin books appeared on the list for the classical students.³ The program for 1851⁴ indicated composition in all three years of the English Department, Parker's Aids being the prescribed text. A footnote to the program of the Classical Department stated that "If Classical studies are pursued, of course some English branches must be omitted."⁵ The subjects to be left out were not designated, but composition was probably one of them, for the work in translation was usually considered an adequate substitute. The course of study⁶ for 1858 failed to mention composition, but

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1. Ibid., 52.
 2. Ibid., 58.
 3. Ibid., 75.
 4. Ibid., 78.
 5. Ibid., 79.
 6. Grizzell, op.cit., 312-314.

rhetoric was included, with a lessened prescription for classical students. In 1859 the course was practically the same.¹ Both the English and the Classical Departments in 1865 had "Special Exercises at stated times in Declamation, Composition, Reading, Drawing, Writing, and Moral Science."² In 1872 there were still special exercises in composition in the English department, but no mention was made of them in the classical.³

Although the New Britain course of study in the first year of the establishment of the high school (1850), did not mention composition,⁴ it was included in the program for 1853.⁵ "Composition once in three weeks in all classes" was the prescription in 1858.⁶ The acting school visitor in 1865 reported "Reading, Spelling, Writing, Drawing, Composition, and Declamation throughout each course."⁷ The report for 1866 was the same in respect to composition.⁸ In 1872 both the English and classical departments had "composition exercises once in three weeks."⁹

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1. Hertzler, op. cit., 83-84.
 2. Grizzell, op. cit., 318-319.
 3. Hertzler, op. cit., 101.
 4. Ibid., 58.
 5. Ibid., 59.
 6. Ibid., 81.
 7. Ibid., 89.
 8. Ibid., 92-93.
 9. Ibid., 104.

Waterbury, like Hartford, also had an entrance examination in composition, but it was limited to note and letter writing.¹ In the high school composition was studied by all students in 1857,² while in 1861³ the subject was restricted to the first four years of the five year course, weekly exercises being prescribed. The program for 1863 omitted it also from the first year.⁴ In 1866-67 it was a weekly study in the second, third, and fourth years of a five year course.⁵

Although Naugatuck established a so-called high school in 1852, it had a very elementary curriculum even as late as 1864, offering only reading, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. In 1866 more advanced subjects were added, but composition was not one of them.⁶

In 1859 composition was taught to all students throughout the year in New London's two high schools, the Young Ladies High School (established in 1855) and the Bartlett High School, for boys, (established about 1856).⁷ The program for the girls' school in 1872 mentions composition in the first three years. In the fourth

1. Ibid., 52-53.

2. Ibid., 59-60.

3. Ibid., 86-87.

4. Ibid., 87-88.

5. Annual Report of the Board of Education of the State of Connecticut (1867), 65.

6. Hertzler, op. cit., 45-46.

7. Ibid., 207.

year it is replaced by rhetoric.¹

The two grammar schools of New Haven, the Eaton and the Webster Schools, in 1848 taught composition. When in 1859 the high school was established, it was not included.² By 1861³ it had found a place in the curriculum, but in 1863 it was not listed in the course of studies.⁴ In 1867, however, "During each term of the year, at stated times, all the pupils will have exercises in ... composition".⁵ "English Language & Composition" was added in 1869 as a separate course for the first year.⁶ No change was recorded in 1870.⁷ The Annual Report of the Board of Education⁸ in 1890 shows that there were "Regular weekly exercises in composition or declamation" throughout the four years of the English department. Likewise, in the two year commercial course, composition was listed as one of the general exercises, but in the other two courses, the classical

1. Ibid., 104.

2. Ibid., 60.

3. Ibid., 61.

4. Stout, The Development of High-School Curricula in the North Central States from 1860 to 1918, 8. Hertzler, op. cit., 60-61, probably inadvertently omitted composition from the course of study for 1863, for Stout, quoting from the same source, included it.

5. Hertzler, op. cit., 96.

6. Ibid., 97.

7. Ibid., 98.

8. Pp. 241-243.

and the scientific, it was omitted.

In the course of study for 1871 the Natchaug School, established in 1865, made no mention of composition in either the English or classical departments, although rhetoric was taught in the third and fourth years.¹

Norwalk organized a high school in 1852, but was unable consistently to offer high school work.² In 1855 instruction in composition was given.³ In 1858, it was required in the English department, but not in the classical.⁴

The occasional character of composition teaching persisted in Connecticut schools to the end of the century. The Report of the State Board of Education⁵ in 1897 shows there was no uniformity of practice. In

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1. Hertzler, op.cit., 99-100.
 2. Ibid., 217.
 3. Ibid., 59.
 4. Ibid., 81-82.
 5. In accordance with a resolution passed by the General Assembly of 1895, the State Board of Education made a study of existing high school conditions so that it might make recommendations for the extension of the high school system. The subject of English, comprising composition, rhetoric, grammar, and "English", was one of the studies investigated. See the Report of the Board of Education of the State of Connecticut (1897), 144, 162.
 6. Ibid., 162.

fact, the Board found it impossible to give statistics on composition teaching, since many schools reporting the subject meant by the term "composition" only occasional essays.¹ In forty-one of the fifty-eight high schools of Connecticut, however, the subject was reported in the curriculum in some form. Of the remaining seventeen schools, certainly some taught it, for earlier records (for example, those of Hartford) show its introduction. Then, too, the blanket term "English" no doubt included composition. One school, Danbury, frankly admitted no special instruction in English, believing rather that by emphasizing good English in written and oral work in all studies, as good results could be obtained as through a formal composition course.²

In spite of the diversity of the reports, certain tendencies are evident. In the main, the nature of the work was much as it had been earlier in the century, -- "throughout the course", -- the requirements ranging all the way from daily to bi-monthly exercises.³ Very

1. Ibid., 162.

2. Ibid., 163.

3. The following references to the frequency of composition occur in the Annual Report of the Board of Education of the State of Connecticut (1897):

Bethel: "Once a week or oftener during the first year, short compositions. Essays every two weeks during second year ... During third year, more
(Note continued on page 95)

marked is the tendency to place the study of some textbook, such as Lockwood's, in the early years of the course, either the first or the first and second, so that the student might receive at the beginning of his course the fundamentals on which to base his later composition work.¹ This textbook study was followed by compositions written at intervals, which, in some schools,

3. (Note continued from page 94)
extended essay work." p. 163.

Derby: "A feature of the composition work is daily five-minute exercises in the first year. In the second year more formal work is required, and this increases in difficulty to the end of the course." p. 163.

Farmington: "An effort is made to have one composition a month." p. 164.

Naugatuck: "When Lockwood's book is finished in second year, the class becomes an essay class, which furnishes an essay once in about eight weeks." p. 165.

Orange: "Formal composition about three times a year; lesser composition constantly." p. 166.

Salisbury (Lakeville): "Composition based on collateral studies almost daily." p. 166.

1. Eleven schools reported a composition text studied in the first year: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Huntington, New Britain, New Milford, Orange, Plymouth (Terryville), South Windsor, Stafford, Vernon, and Windsor. Ibid., 163-167.

Ten schools reported a textbook studied in the first and second years: Derby, Farmington (Center), Greenwich, Naugatuck, New Haven, Portland (Gilder-sleeve) #1, Portland #2, Seymour, Southington, Stamford. Ibid., 163-167.

Three schools reported textbook study in the second year: Guilford, Milford, and Windsor Locks; two in the third year: New Hartford and Saybrook; and two in the second and third years: Old Saybrook and Stonington. Ibid., 164-167.

culminated in a supreme effort, the graduation essay.¹ Grammar, when it was studied, was usually placed in the first year, either preceding the composition course or concurrent with it.² A practice already noted in earlier years still persisted, that of omitting composition when Latin was studied. Wethersfield and Windsor subscribed to that policy.³ Stratford reported no English except what was gotten from Latin, which was studied by all pupils.⁴ In schools offering a commercial course, composition was included as part of the work. Southington required one half year's instruction in that subject in its two year business course.⁵ A new trend manifest in this report is the close association of composition and literature. Typical of the new practice is the statement of Greenwich, "Compositions

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1. Bethel: "During third [last] year, more extended essay work, some of which are written several times over; one element in this essay work is preparation for graduation." Ibid., 163.
 2. See Table IV. Ibid., 163-167.
 3. Ibid., 167. Wethersfield reported: "Those who take Latin do not take English. The aim of the English course is to give as good English expression as would be gained by the study of Latin with careful translation."
 4. Ibid., 167.
 5. Ibid., 166.

on subjects derived from English literature."¹ Another departure is the assignment of responsibility for the English to one teacher, as at Waterbury, which reported, "A single teacher gives her entire time to teaching English language and literature."²

Massachusetts

Massachusetts did not, like its sister state Connecticut, have legislation specifically requiring composition teaching. The law of 1827, which established the two grades of schools, elementary and secondary, was silent on the subject, nor did any of the subsequent revisions provide for it. The law did, however, require the teaching of orthography, reading, and grammar. That requirement, according to the interpretation of the secretary of the Board of Education did not exclude composition, but rather included it by implication. His comment is as follows:

It is competent for teachers, with the sanction of the committee, to require pupils who are prepared

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1. Ibid., 164. Killingly reported, "English in some form, chiefly compositions on books read throughout the course." Ibid., 164.
New Canaan: "Essays on authors are written." Ibid., 165.
Windham: "No attempt is here made to separate the language from the literature." Ibid., 167.
 2. Ibid., 167.

for the exercise, to engage in writing composition as a fit and effective means of teaching orthography, reading, and grammar.¹

He cited as a precedent the decision of the supreme court of Vermont in a case involving compulsory composition. The courts of Massachusetts, he assumed, would probably support the same doctrine since the decision was "in harmony with reason and not repugnant to public policy or individual rights."

The private schools, on the whole, attended to composition. An advertisement in the Sun, April 10, 1822, announced that the Pittsfield Academy had been organized and would give instruction in a variety of subjects, including composition.² The Leicester Academy, on the other hand, made no mention of composition in 1834, but did teach Blair's Rhetoric in the upper school.³ At the Round Hill School, Northampton, the study of the English language was considered "of the first importance ... Exercises in writing English are early

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1. Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the [Mass.] Board of Education (1861), 90. This interpretation is given in connection with the common school law, but since the three subjects mentioned were also required in the high school, the same interpretation would undoubtedly apply there.
 2. Inglis, Rise of the High School in Massachusetts, 13.
 3. Ibid., 12.

commenced and never relinquished."¹ In Russell's American Journal of Education for September, 1826, Mrs. G.F. Thayer's School in Boston was commended for the "practical and minutely exact instruction given."²

Spelling is a daily lesson, except for Mondays, when composition, takes the place of it, every week with the first class, and every other week with the second class. Boys prove their most palpable errors in composition by parsing the sentence."³

The Mt. Pleasant Classical Institution, at Amherst, considered translation as part of the training in composition:

Original themes and translations are read weekly at the desk, by the senior boys. The younger are exercised early in writing letters, and in translating from the languages with which they are occupied.⁴

At the Chauncey-Hall School in Boston (1840) William Russell did "excellent work in elocution, rhetoric, and the systematic teaching of English literature and composition."⁵ In the Phillips Academy at Andover, English instruction, as far as classical students were concerned, developed late. In 1820, only English grammar was

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1. American Journal of Education (Russell's), II (Aug. 1827), 459.
 2. Ibid., I (Sept. 1826), 508.
 3. Ibid., 563.
 4. Ibid., III (May 1828), 299.
 5. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XXIV (May 1884), 190.

taught in the preparatory course. "Written translation" furnished practice in composition according to the catalogue of 1840.¹ As late as 1876 composition had no definitely assigned place in the classical department, for one hour a week was set aside for either elocution, composition, or translation. In the English department, however, written translation dropped out, and composition and elocution were taught "through the course."²

In the girls' schools, composition was regularly included. The High School for Girls, a private academy at Greenfield, announced,

In our judgment the most important of all acquisitions for a young lady, is a correct, unaffected and graceful use of our own language, both in conversation and composition. To this end the attention of our pupils will not be limited to grammatical and rhetorical rules. The accurate and precise use of words will be constantly inculcated; the standard authors in English literature will be critically read and analyzed; a library embracing the best models of style shall be always accessible, and frequent exercises in composition will be required.³

Bonfil's Female Seminary (Boston) likewise offered composition, teaching it in the last three years of a four

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1. Carpenter, Baker, and Scott, The Teaching of English, 44, footnote.
 2. Fortieth Annual Report of the [Mass.] Board of Education (1875-76), app., 227-8.
 3. American Journal of Education (Russell's), III (Aug. 1828), 489.

year course, Irving's Elements of Composition being the textbook used in the second year.¹

The Annual Report of the Board of Education for the school year 1875-6 shows that composition in the academies of the state was commonly regarded as a general exercise extending throughout the course.² An occasional school placed the composition work definitely in the first year. That was the practice at the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham in both the academic and college preparatory departments. The two one-year courses, the Common English and the Business, also included work in composition.³ In some schools, for example the Roxbury

1. Ibid., III (Dec. 1828), 739.

2. Phillips Academy at Andover: "English composition ... taught throughout the course." Fortieth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education (1875-6), Appendix, 228.

Bradford Academy: "Lessons throughout the course in English composition, elocution, and vocal music." Ibid., App., 263. In addition "English prose-writing" was listed for each of the four years. Ibid., App., 262.

Maplewood Institute, Pittsfield: "essay writing" throughout the higher course. Ibid., App., 311.

Lasell Seminary for Young Women, Auburndale: composition was taught "in the seminary proper, and in the college preparatory department." Ibid., App., 313.

English and Classical School, West Newton: "Instruction in language and grammar is given largely by the oral method, which is followed up by careful class drill and copious written exercises." Ibid., App., 317.

3. Ibid., App. 273. Warren Academy at Woburn also had "exercises in ... composition" the first year. Ibid., App., 288.

Latin School¹ and the St. Mark's School,² the composition work was reserved for the last three years.

As for the public schools, the Boston English Classical School, the model for succeeding high schools, had set a precedent in 1821 by requiring composition in each of the three years of the course.³ By 1823, there had been, however, a modification of the curriculum, the report of the school committee⁴ for that year showing that it was taught only in the second and third years. Ten years later it was again found in the first year.⁵ In 1852, when a four year course was introduced, it was ruled that "The several classes shall also have exercises in English Composition and Declamation."⁶ Barnard's survey of 1867 revealed the same practice in that year.⁷

When a high school for girls was considered in Boston in 1825, the committee in making its recommendations emphasized composition, suggesting frequent

1. Ibid., App., 212. Essays were required monthly.

2. Ibid., App., 328.

3. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XIX (1870), 485.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 486.

6. Stout, The Development of the High School Curriculum, 3-4.

7. Barnard's American Journal of Education, XIX (1870) 486.

exercises in connection with grammar as well as its systematic teaching, "a regular exercise in all the classes."¹ Several months later when the course of study was presented to the Board, composition was included in all three years.² Discontinued in 1826, the school was re-established in 1854. The regulations of the school committee for 1857 call for exercises in composition in all three years.³ Barnard's survey ten years later showed the requirement still to be the same.⁴ In 1873 there was a reorganization of the program resulting in increased attention to composition. The school committee commented on the change as follows:

It will be observed, from a study of the programme, that great prominence is now given to practice in English Composition, a new and thorough system having been arranged throughout the various classes, and this is regarded by the committee as of the greatest practical importance. In addition to the regular class-work in composition, an hour is devoted, every two weeks, to the reading of two or more compositions from each class before the whole school.⁵

It is evident that composition was beginning to lose its

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1. Amer. Jour. of Ed. (Russell's), I (Feb. 1826), 99.
 2. Ibid., 103-105. The advertisement of the school, Nov. 5, 1825, in the Columbian Centinel (p. 3) also mentioned composition: "it is expected that the master will be prepared to teach, on this system [the monitorial], so far as it shall be found practicable, Reading, Spelling, Writing, words and sentences from dictation, English Grammar, with exercises in the same, Composition," etc. See Grizzell, op. cit., 45.
 3. Annual Rept. of the Sch. Com. of the City of Boston (1857), 298-9.
 4. Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XIX (1870), 483.
 5. Ann. Rept. of the Sch. Comm. of the City of Boston (1873), 50.

incidental character and was assuming a position of prominence in the curriculum.

Even that staunch guardian of the classics, the Boston Latin School, made concessions to the new spirit in education. It was during the headmastership of Gould (1814-1828) that reforms were made. At first arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, algebra, and geography were added, but by 1826 declamation, reading, English grammar, English composition, forensic discussions, history and chronology, and the constitutions of the United States and Massachusetts had found their way into the curriculum.¹ However, composition was not taught throughout the six years. Mr. Thomas Cushing, who entered the Latin School in 1824, in a letter to Dr. Barnard almost sixty years later, reported "English Composition by the highest class."² Its introduction in the fifth year is indicated by the Regulations of the School Committee for 1826.³ Headmaster Gould, however, considering translation a form of English composition, reported its introduction in the third year.⁴ According to the report of the School Committee of the City of Boston in 1857, Parker's Aids to English Composition was

1. Inglis, Principles of Sec. Ed., 165.

2. Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XXIV (May 1884), 183.

3. Inglis, Rise of the High-School in Mass., 6-7.

4. Amer. Jour. of Ed., (Russell's) I (Apr. 1826), 268.

specifically named as one of the studies in the third, fourth and fifth years.¹ The course of study² for 1860 showed English composition still listed for those years, while in 1883 it was required in all but the first two years.³

When in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] high school for girls, composition⁴ was included as part of the "practical education at which the school aimed."⁵

In 1828, both [REDACTED] teaching

[REDACTED] A footnote to the "Order of Studies in the Worcester High School" (1862) explained "There will be exercises in Orthography, Penmanship, Composition, and Declamation throughout the course."⁷

In Plymouth,⁸ the next pioneer of the high school movement in Massachusetts, the Committee on Schools recommended the teaching of composition in 1826, although the school was not opened until 1828. The superintendent of schools in 1857 prescribed "for all the members of the school, through the whole course,

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1. Ann. Rept. of the Sch. Comm. of the City of Boston (1857), 302.
 2. Jenks, Cat. of the Boston Pub. Lat. Sch., 65.
 3. Ibid., 79.
 4. Grizzell, op. cit., 290.
 5. Ibid., 51.
 6. Ibid., 290-291.
 7. Ibid., 316-317.
 8. Ibid., 55.

exercises in ... Composition."¹

Salem, which had shown its progressive spirit in 1801 by authorizing the teaching of composition in the grammar school in addition to Latin and Greek,² included composition in its curriculum³ at the establishment of the high school in 1827.⁴ The school records of 1836 show composition in the course of study.⁵ In 1854, the three high schools show a variety of practice in regard to the subject, the Fisk School (Latin Grammar School) not mentioning it, the Bowditch School (English High School for Boys) teaching it "throughout the course", and the Salstonstall School (Girls' High School) including it only in the first year of a three-year course.⁶

Composition was taught in the Springfield High School in 1852;⁷ likewise in Lowell from 1849 to 1851.⁸ In the latter school, 90% of the boys and all of the girls received instruction in composition during those years. The course of study for 1852, however, made no mention of it in either the English or

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1. Inglis, Rise of the High-School in Mass., 129.
 2. See Chapter II, 50.
 3. Amer. Jour. of Ed. (Russell's), III (Aug. 1828), 492-3. Mentioned in an address by Stephen C. Phillips, Chairman of the School Committee, at the end of the first year.
 4. Grizzell, op. cit., 64.
 5. Ibid., 292.
 6. Ibid., 310-311.
 7. Ibid., 294.
 8. Inglis, Rise of the High-School in Mass., 91.

classical departments.¹ "English language and literature" were taught in the New Bedford High School, in 1870, three times a week for four years. The course included "progressively reading, syntax, analysis, synonymy, derivations, prefixes and affixes, composition and rhetoric."²

The Cambridge course of study for 1849³ included rhetoric but was silent on the subject of composition. In 1852⁴ grammar was required for three years, and declamation "from the male members of the school once in three weeks," but no composition. Barnard's survey of 1867 also omitted mention of composition.⁵ Perhaps the reason for the omission is to be found in the fact that the Cambridge high school functioned principally as a preparatory school for Harvard;⁶ hence the English subjects might safely be neglected.

The school committee reports from about 1857 to the close of the century show but little change in the status of composition, which continued in the main

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1. Stout, op. cit., 6.
 2. Lull, op. cit., 259.
 3. Grizzell, op. cit., 293.
 4. Ibid., 328-9.
 5. Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XIX (1870), 463.
 6. Grizzell, op. cit., 86.

as an incidental study.¹ That standards were not very high is evident in Medford, where the committee (1864) prided itself on the "large provision"² made for composition, -- once a month in the first two years and once a fortnight in the third and fourth.³ Other

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1. The following references are from abstracts of School Committee Reports in the Annual Reports of the [Massachusetts] Board of Education:

Brighton High School: "There will be general exercises in Composition and Declamation, and a weekly lesson in Moral Science, during the whole course." 20th Ann. Rept. (1857), App. 184.

Watertown: Composition throughout the course in both the English and classical departments. Ibid., App., 211-12.

Quincy: "Written compositions shall be required of all the pupils in the High and Grammar Schools." 20th Ann. Rept. (1866), App. 259.

Newburyport: Monthly exercises in composition throughout the course in both the English and classical departments of the Brown High School. In the Female High School Quackenbos' English composition was prescribed for the first and second years.

"Composition during the course." 30th Ann. Rept. (1867), App. 52. Three years later composition exercises in both the English and classical departments were weekly instead of monthly. 33rd Ann. Rept. (1870), App. 75.

North Bridgewater: "Compositions and Declamations through the entire course." Ibid., App. 280.

Woburn: "Declamations and Compositions through the course." 31st Ann. Rept. (1868), App. 128.

Bradford: "General Exercises ... Declamations and Compositions, weekly, through the course." 32nd Ann. Rept. (1869), App. 52.

Lawrence: Composition during the first three years, along with drawing, writing, reading, declamation, and botany. 37th Ann. Rept. (1872-3), App. 48.

2. Twenty-seventh Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Board of Ed. (1864), App. 87.
3. Ibid., App., 90

reports of the same period, although attesting an appreciation of the importance of composition, indicate confusion as to the best means of attaining the end sought. Superintendent H.K. Oliver of Lawrence (1859) suggested a historical study of the English language and the critical study of literature to provide that "exact and elaborate training requisite to prepare ... [the students'] minds for a more comprehensive grasp" of the "great art" of composition.¹ The Lowell School Committee five years later, noting a revision of the course with greater emphasis on English, recommended that students keep a commonplace book of their compositions.² The Dartmouth school committee went directly to the heart of the matter in its observation:

Insist upon your scholars writing compositions often; examine them carefully, correct them, and make such observations as are necessary ... Scholars should begin to write compositions at an early age, and continue the practice as long as they attend school.³

But in spite of the increased attention to composition in a few of the schools, in the state as a whole composition did not make great progress. In many schools the composition requirement was probably a paper one, placed in the curriculum to impress the

1. Twenty-second Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Bd. of Ed. (1859), App. 41-42.
2. Twenty-seventh Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Bd. of Ed. (1864), App., 76.
3. Ibid., App. 207.

public, but never enforced. B.S. Hurlbut of the Harvard faculty, writing in 1892 of his preparatory training about 1880, describes his experience as follows:

Thirteen years ago I was ready to enter the high school. In grammar, I had parsed my way from the fifth to the first grade of the school. In those five years I had written perhaps five compositions. These were done outside the regular work to please one or two teachers whose consciences had occasionally pricked them on the subject of English composition. I spent four years in the high school, without writing, as far as I can remember, a single composition. Once a week for three years I read Shakespeare, Scott, or Longfellow, and once a month I declaimed. Such was my English education when I entered Harvard, and I came from the public schools of a large Massachusetts city.¹

If composition was thus neglected in the larger schools, it is not difficult to imagine what the situation was in the smaller.

Official statements confirm Mr. Hurlbut's testimony. George H. Martin, Agent of the Board, reporting in 1885 on the high schools, does not include composition in the list of subjects studied. He mentions it as one of the subjects included in a general way under "English", which "In the best schools ... is studied in some form throughout the course."² It is significant that the discussion of his observations in the classroom, although dealing with grammar, rhetoric,

1. Harvard U., Twenty Years of School and College English, 50.

2. Forty-eighth Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Bd. of Ed. (1883-4), App. B, 190.

and literature, omits entirely any mention of composition. The same incidental treatment of composition is seen in a course of studies for high schools, prepared by Frank H. Hill of the Chelsea High School and included in the secretary's report for the year 1884-5. Composition, which is not one of the regular studies, is to receive attention throughout the course. He does not recommend regularly prepared compositions read before the school and criticised by the teacher, but rather "It is a better plan, doubtless, if it be systematically followed up, to rely on the regular work of the school for composition practice."¹ He suggests note-taking and abstract making as well as preparation of reports and translations. That conditions were not greatly improved as late as 1894 is indicated by a statement of Mr. John T. Prince, Agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education:

A recent inspection of the high schools of two counties of Massachusetts showed that great differences exist in the amount of time given to English, the number of recitations of a four years' preparatory course varying from 120 to 880. The amount of written work required was found to be lamentably small, being limited in some schools to one exercise a month.²

In general, in the nineteenth century

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1. 49th Annual Rept. of the Mass. Bd. of Ed. (1884-5),
121.
 2. Jour. of Proceedings and Addresses of the N.E.A.
(1894), 290.

composition in Massachusetts was listed¹ as one of the studies in a class with declamation, music, and spelling. About the 60's it made some gains, as is evident from the favorable reports made by the school committees.² The practice, on the whole, was to omit it from the classical department, but to include it in the commercial

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1. That composition was actually taught in all of the schools that listed it in the course of study is doubtful. Fowle, in an editorial in the Common School Journal (1852), p. 375, wrote, "even now, a large number of our schools have no composition taught in them. No wonder, for not one teacher in 10 can write with tolerable ease and correctness. In an institute in Massachusetts (1850) we required 117 teachers to write what they could in fifteen minutes on "happiness." At the end of fifteen minutes, but seven teachers had done anything, and four of these had requested to be excused from writing. Then three more periods of fifteen minutes were given, and only twenty teachers had been able to write anything in the end." (See Lyman, op. cit., 149).
 2. In the lower schools composition apparently made considerable headway in the 30's and 40's. Horace Mann in his Third Annual Report as Secretary of the Board of Education (1839) said: "The ability to express ideas in writing, with vigor and perspicuity, is now deemed so valuable, that, in many places, composition has been added to the list of Common School studies." (See Amer. Jour. of Ed. (Russell's), II (May, 1840), 151). Further proof of its introduction is found in the report of the committee of Carver which noted that scholars from the age of ten to fifteen "can compose, write and fold a letter, in a handsome form," a skill mastered by very few a generation earlier. (Mass. Sch. Ret., 1839, 413. See Lyman, op. cit., 150.). The school committee of Sterling in 1840 reported the successful introduction of composition into some schools. "This impor- (Note continued on page 113)

It was an important part of the work in schools for girls.¹ When it was listed as a regular study, it was frequently found in the first year, and sometimes continued in the second.²

Rhode Island

Although Connecticut's neighbor had no legislation favorable to composition, it did have for a time the services of Connecticut's energetic educa-

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2. (Note continued from page 112)
 tant branch has been too much neglected in former years ... English Composition should come next in order ... to grammar." (Mass. Sch. Ret., 1840, 123. See Lyman, op. cit., 150). The next year the Rockport committee "urged upon more advanced scholars, who are acquainted with grammar, the importance of writing composition ... This should be a standing exercise in our schools ... This exercise is too much regarded as a matter of form." (Mass. Sch. Ret., 1841, 27. See Lyman, op. cit., 150.)
1. (Notes to page 113)
 The superintendent of public schools in Lawrence, speaking of the education of girls, said, "Particularly would I insist upon the art of composition, that they may be enabled to do, what very many women, and men too, are unable to do, commit to writing their own thoughts readily, correctly, gracefully, yet vigorously." See the 22nd Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Bd. of Ed. (1859), 53.
2. In the Watertown High school, Quackenbos' English Composition was a part of the first year work in the English course. See 20th Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Bd. of Ed. (1857), App. 211-12. In the Newburyport Female High School, Quackenbos was prescribed for the first and second years. See the 30th Ann. Rept. of the [Mass.] Bd. of Ed. (1867), App., 52.

tional leader, Henry Barnard, who in 1843 became Commissioner of education in Rhode Island. As part of the activities of the Rhode Island Institute of Instruction, which he had formed to disseminate information about education and to awaken the interest of teachers, parents, school commissioners, and the public in general in education, he published "Aids to English Composition." This tract was one of a series of nine pamphlets on methods of teaching. The subject of composition was also included in the list of topics, similar to the one he had used in Connecticut, to guide discussion at teachers' meetings. As a result of Barnard's efforts, "music, linear drawing, composition, and mathematics as applied to practical life ... [were] introduced into many schools."¹ Although Barnard's chief concern was with the common schools, his labors were bound to encourage composition in general.

When Providence established the first high school in Rhode Island in 1843,² composition was taught.³ Records for the years 1855-68 also show its presence in the curriculum.⁴ Since the Providence High School

1. Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XIV (Sept. 1864), 574.

2. Although the by-laws and regulations were published by the School Committee in 1840, the school was not ready to function until 1843. Grizzell, op. cit., 257-260.

3. Ibid., 293.

4. Ibid., 295.

served as a model for the six high schools established before 1865,¹ it is probable that composition teaching was extended to them. Later school reports indicate its presence in Woonsocket (1872)² and in Warren (1872)³, where Friday afternoons were devoted to "Declamations, Compositions, and Music." Toward the close of the century (1898) Warren was given "Ever increasing attention to the study and use of the mother tongue." In the lowest classes three periods a week were devoted to the principles of English composition, including a study of the best authors.⁴

A decidedly progressive attitude was shown by the Rogers High School in Newport which in 1880⁵ suggested the advisability of devoting to composition part of the time spent on grammar. A unified program in English composition extending through the four years had been worked out. The next year the status of the subject was strengthened by the requirement of an examina-

1. Ibid., 262.

2. Third Annual Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of R.I. (1873), App., 144. In the 12th Ann. Rept. (1882), App., 95, "very exacting and thorough drills in composition" were indicated.

3. Third Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of R.I. (1873), App., 278.

4. 29th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1899), App., 114

5. 11th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1881), App., 89-90.

tion.¹ English composition had been elevated to a position level with such subjects as mathematics and science as a prerequisite for a diploma.

In Barrington in 1886² composition and declamation exercises began with the second year and continued through the course. In 1891 an attempt was made to make that ruling something more than a dead letter, for it was reported: "The high school is now doing the best work it has ever done ... All the scholars are required (and the requirement is enforced) to prepare a composition, or declamation, or recitation, every fortnight."³ Again in 1893⁴ the school reported improvement "especially in the study of English composition." At the time essays were indicated in the course of study for the third and fourth years.⁵

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1. 12th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1882) App., 84. It may be that the principal of the Rogers High school was following the example of New York State which in 1877 required an examination in rhetoric and composition of candidates for the intermediate certificate in the general three year course, but not of those in the classical department. It was not until 1890, however, that New York State gave a separate composition examination, and not until 1894 that the ability to write good English became a prerequisite to the Regents diploma. See p.133 ff.
 2. 17th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1887), App., 85.
 3. 22nd Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1892), App., 78.
 4. 24th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1894), App., 111.
 5. Ibid., App., 127.

Westerly also showed concern about the English work, the school committee recommending in 1887 that in all the schools composition and declamation should not be optional but required.¹ Bristol at the same time decreed that "Each week there shall be general exercises in reading, or declamation, spelling and composition, throughout all the courses."²

Principal G.H. Carrier of the Johnston High School in 1891 was arranging the composition work to meet the needs of the individual, and was successful, at least to the point of satisfying the president of Brown University, who "judging from the sample ... under his observation, ... expressed himself as well pleased with the work done in that department."³ The report for 1895 showed that of twenty-three and a half months of the high school course given to English, ten were given to composition, an equal number to literature, and the remainder to rhetoric.⁴

When high school work was introduced into

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1. 18th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1888), App., 110.
 2. Ibid., App., 93.
 3. 22nd Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1892), App., 77.
 4. 26th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1896), App., 112.

the grammar school of North Kingstown in 1891, "Exercises in composition and declamation" were required throughout the two year course.¹ With the adoption of a new course of study for grades 10-12 of the advanced grammar school in 1895, English composition in the 10th and 11th grades was followed by rhetoric in the 12th.²

"Declamations and essays average one every two weeks for each pupil" was the requirement throughout the course in East Providence (1893).³ The superintendent at Warwick required that at stated intervals "scholars of the most advanced class" submit to him compositions on assigned subjects.⁴ Central Falls, on the other hand, taught its composition "in connection with Rhetoric and American and English Literature."⁵

The status of composition in the public high schools of Rhode Island in 1899 is summarized in a study of the high school curriculum made by the Rhode Island Branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumni.⁶

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1. 23rd Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1893), App., 129.
 2. 26th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1896), App., 115.
 3. 24th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1894), App., 116.
 4. 27th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1897), App., 135.
 5. Ibid., App., 116.
 6. 30th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1900), "Rept. on H.S. Cur.", 30-31.

Of the seventeen high schools in the state, six required some type of composition in each of the four years; one required it in the last two years of a three year course; one in the four years of the classical course and in the first year of the English, after which, in the second and third years, it was elective; one required it the first three years, to be replaced by college entrance English in the fourth; one required it the first year only. Seven schools made no specific mention of it, two of them requiring "English" for four and one for five years. The remaining four schools prescribed varying combinations of English, rhetoric, and literature, in connection with which composition was undoubtedly taught. The only safe conclusion to be drawn from that report is that there was no uniformity in the composition requirement in the State of Rhode Island in the year 1899.

In the private schools varying degrees of emphasis were placed on the subject. The Smithville Seminary at North Scituate, according to a catalogue of 1845, made no provision for composition except in the weekly rhetorical exercises consisting of composition and declamation.¹ The University Grammar

1. Tolman, History of Higher Ed. in R.I., 67-68.

School,¹ situated at first in Warren and later removed to Providence, progressed from "reading and speaking the English language with propriety" (1776) and "English languages taught grammatically" (1786) to weekly exercises in declamation and composition in the English department (1851). In 1871 these exercises were required in the classical department also. In the Friends' School² in Providence in 1894 English composition was listed in the curriculum for every year of the literary and scientific course, but only in the second year of the classical course. The Warren Ladies' Seminary in 1894 limited the exercises to the first and second years of the three year course.³ Although the Kent Academy in the same year listed rhetoric for a term in each of the five courses of study, composition was not mentioned.⁴

It may be concluded that in the period 1820 to 1900, composition made no great progress in Rhode Island until the last two decades. Then, at least one school was more progressive even than New York State, designating composition as a prerequisite for a high school diploma for all pupils as early as 1881.

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1. Ibid., 35-37.
 2. Ibid., 50.
 3. Ibid., 85.
 4. Ibid., 63-66.

Maine

Social developments in Maine followed in general the lines of development in Massachusetts, for until 1820 Massachusetts controlled that northeastern territory. Therefore we can expect to find Maine following the lead of her guardian state in education.

According to the charter of the Gardiner Lyceum, in Gardiner, the school was established to enable mechanics and farmers to become skilful in their occupations. The work was not so narrowly vocational, however, as to exclude composition, which was taught in the last two years of the three year course.¹

Although Portland's first English High School, modeled after those of Massachusetts, included composition in its course of study,² there were no enrollments reported in that subject in 1837-38. In the Female Grammar Schools, however, which were offering advanced studies with a view to becoming high schools, it was studied.³ In 1867, the high school offered "Grammar of Composition" in the first year of the general course

1. Amer. Jour. of Ed., (Russell's), II (April, 1827), 218.

2. Grizzell, op. cit., 292.

3. Ibid., 112.

and opportunity for "Occasional Exercises in Declamation, Composition, and Select Reading by the whole School."¹

In 1848, the Hallowell High School reported that "Reading, spelling, defining, writing, composition and declamation are attended to two half days in the week."² The high school in Lewiston, however, according to Barnard's survey of 1867, offered no composition.³

Late in the century we find the state department of education urging attention to composition. In a suggested course of study for the high schools of the state, a composition course is definitely placed in the first year of both the English and college preparatory courses. The suggestion is made that the work in rhetoric, grammar, and literature in the other three years contribute to the teaching of composition. Particularly is the close association of composition with literature urged:

No matter whether a boy is going to college or not, he needs careful and constant drill in English composition -- not for one or two terms only, but for

1. Ibid., 324-5.

2. Ibid., 190.

3. Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XIX (1870), 463.

every term of the high school course. And the study of literature should occupy some part of almost every term of the course, because the student who is trying to learn to write, needs to have good models always before him.¹

With particular reference to the college preparatory course it is recommended that "throughout the course, the strongest emphasis should be laid on the work in English Composition."²

That this proposed course of study is a reflection of the procedure of some of the larger and better schools of the state is evident from a paper read at the Cumberland County Teachers' Association at the annual meeting in 1895 by Miss C. Potter, teacher in the Brunswick High School. The course of study she outlined showed attention to Lockwood's Lessons in English during the first year with supplementary reading and frequent written work. Throughout the course there was much work in literature with written expression of opinion.³

New Hampshire

Although Portsmouth established a high school as early as 1827, the other New Hampshire cities

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1. Rept. of the State Supt. of Common Schools of the State of Me. (1895), App., 90.
 2. Ibid., App., 91.
 3. Ibid., App., 100.

did not follow its example very rapidly. There were only four more organized before 1850, and it was not until the decade 1850-1860 that the movement really became established.¹ Consequently, composition was not very extensively taught in New Hampshire before 1850.

There were several testimonials to the neglect of the subject. Swett, in his American Public Schools, speaking of his district school education about 1840, says:

Composition-writing was unknown to us. We were supposed to acquire the 'art of writing the English language with propriety' by a textbook study of Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody, without writing even a sentence.²

Nor was the situation greatly improved in the academy where

when pursuing a Latin course, which included, in order, a Latin grammar and Reader, Sallust, Caesar, and Virgil, we were never once required to render a written translation.³

That the situation was not completely remedied even with the establishment of the high schools is evident from the First Annual Report (1868) of Amos Hadley,

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1. Grizzell, op. cit., 181.
 2. Op. cit., 122.
 3. Ibid., 151.

Superintendent of Public Instruction. He called attention "to a great neglect of certain important branches of study," one of which was English composition, although much attention was given to grammar.¹

The regulations of 1836, listing the subjects to be taught in the Portsmouth high schools made no mention of composition, although English grammar was included.² In 1853, however, composition was offered in the boys school, but not in the girls.³ The school committee reported in 1876, "Declamations and Compositions began the first term, and continued throughout the course."⁴

Manchester, in 1845, had fourteen schools, two of which offered, in addition to the common elementary branches, natural philosophy, algebra, bookkeeping, and composition.⁵ In one of the lower schools, also, instruction in composition was given. It followed, therefore, that when the high school was opened in 1846, composition was included in the course of study.

Concord organized a high school in 1847,⁶

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1. Bush, History of Education in New Hampshire, 27.
 2. Grizzell, op. cit., 99.
 3. Ibid., 101.
 4. Ann. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Instr. (1876), 174.
 5. Grizzell, op. cit., 151.
 6. Ibid., 159-60.

but did not teach composition. In 1855, when several districts combined to form a reorganized high school, the new regulations prescribed that the students were to "give faithful attention to the writing of Compositions, Declamation, Drawing," etc.¹ In none of the three courses of study outlined for 1865² was composition mentioned, but probably the usual attention "throughout the course" was given it.

Claremont, which in 1856 did not have a high school, reported that there was a demand for instruction in such high school subjects as "Algebra, Natural Philosophy, Composition, Physics, and others of the higher English branches."³

Two of the schools reporting in 1876 gave particular attention to composition in the first year. Rochester⁴ required it in the spring and fall terms of the first year in all departments. A footnote to the course of study explains that there were compositions by all, three times each term. Dover⁵ required compositions throughout the course, in addition to a special study of the subject one-third of the first

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1. Ibid., 162.
 2. Ibid., 320-22.
 3. Ibid., 174-5.
 4. Ann. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Instr. (1878), 105.
 5. Ibid., 152.

year in both the English and classical courses.

A few of the private schools are on record as offering composition. In 1860, the town of Washington, instead of building a high school, paid tuition for its children at the academy, in which instruction was offered in thirteen subjects, one of them being composition.¹ The Pinkerton Academy, in Derry, announced in 1898, "one constant aim is to teach the vigorous and graceful use of the English language."² Therefore much attention was paid to composition. At Phillips Exeter, composition was taught consistently, but at various times was placed in different years of the course. For instance, a catalogue³ of Principal Abbot's time (1788-1838), shows composition in the second and third years of the English course, and in the third year of the classical, both courses being limited to three years. In 1850, Quackenbos' Composition was studied in the first term of the first year of four year course. In the middle, or third, year, "Themes [were] begun and continued throughout the course."⁴ According to the catalogue of 1882, themes

1. Grizzell, op. cit., 175-6.

2. Bush, op. cit., 82.

3. Cunningham, Familiar Sketches of the Phillips Exeter Academy, 299.

4. Ibid., 301-4.

were written throughout the senior year in the classical course, whereas in the English department, letter-writing and elementary rhetoric were introduced in the first year, followed by a study of Hill's Rhetoric and Abbott's How to Write Clearly in the third.¹

The course of study in 1898 in both the classical and English departments called for Elements of English Composition, letter writing and composition in the first year. Thereafter composition was continued throughout the course.²

It is evident that in New Hampshire composition was not very extensively taught outside of the private schools until 1850. Even then, to judge by one school report, it was not very thoroughly done even as late as 1868.

Vermont

A few courses of study of Vermont high schools show that about the middle of the century, composition was taught in the same incidental fashion as in other New England high schools. The Burlington High School, in 1850, required compositions "fortnightly".³ In 1859, "exercises in composition and

1. Ibid., 304-10.

2. Bush, op. cit., 124-29.

3. Grizzell, op. cit., 236.

declamation" were included in the Windsor High School course of study.¹ The list of subjects studied at Montpelier Union High School from 1860 to 1866 does not include composition.² Similarly, the courses of study of twenty-one academies reported to the board of education for the year 1873-74 do not list composition, although grammar and rhetoric are named.³ The probability is, however, that it was attended to in the same incidental manner as in the other schools, for mention of it is frequently omitted even in the curricula of schools where it was taught.

Unique in the annals of composition teaching is a situation which developed in a district school in Washington County. When the teacher prescribed a composition as part of the work in grammar, an eighteen year old boy refused to write one. The teacher suggested that the boy bring an excuse from his father, but the parent sent word that he had no business with the teacher. Thereupon the trustee advised the teacher not to treat the boy as a pupil, and he finally withdrew. When the matter was taken to court, Chief Justice Redfield upheld the school, affirming that composition is an allowable mode of instruction in the

1. Ibid., 234.

2. Ibid., 243-44.

3. 16th Rept. of the Vt. Bd. of Ed. (1873-4), 291.

majority of subjects constituting a common school education.¹

THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES

New York

Composition, favored by the Regents' ordinance of 1818,² soon became an accepted part of almost every course of study in New York State high schools and academies. When John Griscom, inspired by his visit to the schools of Scotland, returned to New York and founded the High School for boys in 1825, one day a week was devoted to composition.³ The prospectus of the High School of Buffalo (1828) also announced the subject.⁴ In the New-York Free Academy in 1852 it was taught throughout the first three years, half of the fourth year, but omitted in the fifth.⁵

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1. George H. Guernsey v. Daniel W. Pitkin, Supreme Court of Vermont, Washington Co., August Term, 1859. See 32 Vt. 224. Trusler, in his Essentials of School Law (pp. 90-91) cites this case in support of compulsory composition in common schools.
 2. See Chapter II, p. 44.
 3. First annual report of the High-School Society, 6-7. See Brown, op. cit., 306-7.
 4. Amer Jour. of Ed. (Russell's), III (Apr. 1828), 235.
 5. 66th Ann. Rept. of the Reg. (1852), 226-28.

In 1806 when the Regents began collecting statistics of studies pursued in the academies, six of the eleven schools reporting offered "Logic, rhetoric, composition, etc."¹ By 1836 all schools except the New York Institute for Deaf and Dumb reported composition.² Down to the year 1868, when the Regents discontinued the publication of statistics relative to composition, the report is practically the same. Occasional school returns make no mention of the subject, but the omission is in all probability due to negligence in reporting rather than to exclusion of composition from the course. Undoubtedly the desire to share in the state literary fund was largely responsible for the almost universal teaching

1. See Table I, p. 44.

2. 50th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1836), 51.

of composition in the state.¹

The frequency of the exercises varied from once in seven to once in twenty-eight days, but most of the schools required it once in two weeks. Girls, being excused from declamation, were in some schools required to submit compositions more

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1. Efforts for the extension of composition teaching were not limited to the high schools. The state department of education made attempts in the 40's to introduce that subject into the common schools. County Superintendent Stephen Moulton (Oneida Co.) urged the teaching of composition in the common schools, admitting, however, that its inclusion was unusual in schools "so elemental in their instruction", since juvenile minds were usually considered incompetent for the task and teachers were not prepared to teach the subject. (See Ann. Rept. of the Supt. of Com. Schools of the State of N. Y., 1844, 436-41.) When County Superintendent Albert Wright sought to introduce the subject in the northern section of Washington Co., he found but few schools that objected to it. (Ibid., 635.)

frequently.¹

Although occasional reports of individual schools show a genuine interest in composition teaching, the Regents evidently were not entirely satisfied with the instruction, for in 1877 there came a change. In order to raise the standards of academic instruction, the Regents provided for examinations² in certain subjects among which was the composite subject "Rhetoric and Composition". They were on the list of "indispensable subjects", the successful completion of which was a prerequisite for the intermediate certificate in the English, or general course, designed for those

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1. 65th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1851), 17677.
 2. Regents examinations, devised in 1866 to furnish a basis for the distribution of funds devoted to the encouragement of academic education, were until 1877 limited to arithmetic, geography, English grammar, and spelling. In 1880 a law was passed making the distribution of the Literary Fund contingent upon the number of pupils passing the advanced subjects established by the law of 1877. (See the 94th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1881), 467.

whose education terminated after three years at the academy. In the classical, or college entrance course, however, no such examination was necessary to secure the Regents' diploma.¹

A more detailed statement of the requirement shows that the emphasis is still on work of a formal character. The chief concern of the Regents is that the student be able to "name, define, and classify", the sole test of his composition ability being a "short essay upon a subject assigned by ... [the] Board."²

In the syllabus revision of 1890 increased attention was given to the mother tongue. One of the most notable changes was the introduction of English composition "as a practical advanced course in language for those not having time or inclination to study technical grammar and rhetoric."³ Composition, now divorced from rhetoric, emerged as a subject in its own right, although the requirement still emphasized technicalities and matters of form. Literature now usurped the place of rhetoric as a companion study to composition. The close relationship of the two studies was furthered by the examination, which included "an essay...

1. 94th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1881), 468-69.

2. Ibid., 476.

3. 104th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1890), I, 233.

on a topic... taken from the work of some author previously announced." However, in the evaluation of the papers, the ideas apparently were of little importance, since credit was based on "excellence in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, general neatness, precision, clearness, proper use of words and logical sequences of ideas."¹

The new requirements met with immediate approval, for at the next meeting of the Associated Academic Principals, December 1890, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, that in the opinion of the associated academic principals of the state of New York, the subject of English composition is deserving of more attention in the schools of the state, and that we heartily approve of its introduction into the lists of Regents' subjects.²

In the annual report for 1891-2, the Regents expressed themselves as well pleased with the results of the new examinations. English grammar and rhetoric had been largely replaced by Elementary English and English composition. Students did a great deal of reading and writing and less scientific study of grammar and rhetoric. "This was exactly the result aimed at by the university in planning the English courses in the

1. 105th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1891), 14-15.

2. Ibid., 308-9.

present edition of the academic syllabus."¹

The next few years saw the Regents continuing vigorously their campaign for improvement in English. In 1893 a resolution was passed designed to encourage the use of good English not only in the composition class, but in all classes.² They proposed that papers deficient in English be so marked, and that no certificates be issued to students without such limitation plainly indicated, until the condition had been removed either by passing satisfactorily another examination in the same subject or in English composition. The resolution was submitted to the Associated Academic Principals together with an alternative plan providing for the deduction of ten credits for poor English in any examination. After a heated discussion, the principals adopted a resolution expressing their disapproval of marking down students "in the subject matter in mathematics and sciences for deficiency in English."³ The first plan was adopted by the Regents in February, 1894.⁴

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1. 106th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1892), r 68.
 2. 107th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1893), II, 1360-63.
 3. 108th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1894), 591-2.
 4. 107th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1893), II, 1362, footnote.

An even more drastic step taken by the Regents in 1893 was a resolution requiring the satisfactory teaching of the English language, especially in composition, for at least three hours each week during the academic course, as a condition of admission to the University or of retention on the list of institutions in good standing and entitled to receive apportionments from the academic fund.¹

The Laws, Ordinances and By-Laws in the Regents Bulletin for June, 1895, give the law in a slightly modified form. Instead of three hours each week, the requirement is "not less than two and a half 40-minute periods (or their equivalent) each week of satisfactory instruction in the use of English, specially composition."² In the bulletin for 1897 the Regents called attention to the fact that the definite prescription in regard to English was a departure from their usual practice of leaving the curriculum entirely to the local boards. They felt justified in their actions because of the importance of composition and the marked neglect of the subject in some schools.³

1. Ibid., 1360.

2. 108th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1894), 1433. There is a discrepancy in the various publications of the Regents in regard to the requirement in English. The handbook of 1895 calls for at least three hours each week, as did the original resolution (See U.S.N.Y., 2nd Ann. Rept. of the Exam. Dept., (1894, 439). The secretary's report for 1897, however, mentions two and one-half forty minute periods as the minimum. (See 111th Ann. Rept. of the Regts., 1897, r149.)

3. 111th Ann. Rept. of the Regts (1897), r 149-50.

All this agitation in favor of English had the desired result, for every year more students were found in English courses. In 1894, the examination department reported that the work in English had increased 86% in three years, 107% in four years, and 184% in five years. Not a small part of this increase was in the composition courses. Whereas in 1889, 3,937 answer papers were accepted in composition and rhetoric, in 1892 6,365 were accepted in composition, and 1692 in rhetoric. In 1893 the figures were 6,099 and 2,987 respectively; in 1894, 8,101 and 3,396.¹

At every opportunity teachers were reminded of the importance of composition. In 1894 the examiners called attention to the fact that many English papers showed deficiency in sentences, connection of ideas, spelling, and paragraphing. They urged constant attention to composition in all English study, since they held one of the most important aims of the work to be the development in the pupil of power of expression.²

The syllabus revision of 1895, although retaining English composition on the list of English

1. 2nd Ann. Rept. of the Exam. Dept. (1894), 15.

2. 107th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1893), II, 1347.

studies, made full provision for composition throughout the new courses designated as First, Second, and Third Year English. No theoretical study was intended, for it was specifically stated that special emphasis would be placed "on practice in writing English." Furthermore, in these courses the examination paper as a whole was subject to criticism as an exercise in composition. A distinct advance over the syllabus of 1890 is seen in the statement that essays be criticised "for subject matter as well as for form; and a collection of sentences having little or no connection cannot be called a satisfactory essay simply because the individual sentences have no serious grammatic errors."¹ One reason for this new emphasis on content is to be found in the desire to test the pupil's knowledge of the prescribed books. Whatever the motive, it is evident that the Regents were getting away from mere technical considerations.

As a result of the activities of the Regents in the 90's, more and more schools organized composition courses, which, as a rule, were placed in the early years of the high school work. An examination of thirty courses of study reported to the Regents in 1895 shows

1. 2nd Ann. Rept. of the Exam. Dept. (1894), 291 ff.

Table II. -- Allocation of composition courses in the
curricula of thirty high schools of
New York State in 1895¹

Schools	Through- out the course	1st yr.	2nd yr.	3rd yr.	4th yr.
Academy of Sacred Heart, Syracuse				X	
Albany Academy	X				
Albany Female Academy	X				
Albany High School	X				
Buffalo	X				
Buffalo Seminary	X				
D'Youville Academy		X			
Dryden Union School		X			
Elmira Free Academy		X			
Fonda Union School				X	
Gowanda Union School				X	
Ithaca High School				X	
Kingston Free Academy		X			
Knowlesville Union School		X			
Limestone Union School		X			
Littlefalls Union School				X	
Lockport Union School	X				
Marcellus Union School		X			
Marshall Seminary of Easton				X	
Newburg Free Academy					X
Palatine Bridge Union School		X			
Poughkeepsie High School		X			
Rhinebeck Union School				X	
Rochester Free Academy		X			
St. Agnes Female Seminary Brooklyn				X	
St. Bernard's Academy, Cohoes		X			
Schoharie Union School		X			
Stamford Seminary and Union School		X			
West Hebron Union School		X			
Whitesboro Union School		X			

1. Compiled from data in the 109th Ann. Rept. of the
Regts. (1895), 796-1299.

that only six clung to the earlier requirement of "composition throughout the course." One school placed it in the last year; two in the third year. In six it was prescribed for the second year, while the remaining fifteen placed it in the first year. (See Table II.)

A study of the subject placement reported in 1898 reaches a similar conclusion. Table III reveals the favorite position of composition to be the second term of the first year.

Table III. -- Allocation of composition courses in the curricula of a number of high schools of New York State in 1895¹

Course	Year and Term							
	1		2		3		4	
	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b
Latin Scientific	16	25	9	5	2	3		
Classical	16	19	6	4	1		1	1
English	17	29	7	8	2	2	2	

When Henry L. Taylor, assistant to the director of the High School Department reported on "Courses and Working Programs" in 1899, he assigned English composition to the first year. This placement was based on

1. 6th Ann. Rept. of the H. S. Dept. (1898). Compiled from tables on pp. 408-13.

current practice as revealed by a study of 213 courses.¹ When by the syllabus revision of 1895, First, Second, and Third Year English were offered as substitutes for all other courses except the reading courses, special emphasis on composition was required in the first year, to be followed by practice in composition in the succeeding years.² It is evident that composition was recognized as a fundamental study to receive attention as early as possible in the course.

A summary of the history of composition teaching in New York shows its vigorous growth to be due primarily to the constant stimulus given by the Regents. The initial impulse to its development was given by the law of 1818. From 1877 on, when it was designated as a required subject for the intermediate certificate, it made particularly rapid progress. In 1891 the first composition examination was given, in 1893 composition was made a requirement for the academic diploma, and in 1894 the ability to write good English was made a prerequisite to the attainment of a Regents' diploma. No other state even remotely approached New York State in the encouragement given to composition teaching.

1. 7th Ann. Rept. of the H.S. Dept. (1899), r33.
2. 2nd Ann. Rept. of the Exam. Dept. (1894), Exam. Bul. #6 (June, 1895), 273.

New Jersey

The New Jersey school reports give scant mention of composition until late in the century.¹ The course of study in Paterson illustrates the gradually increasing importance of the subject. An early report (1862)² shows "compositions and lessons on morals" throughout the three year course. In 1869³ we learn that compositions are semi-monthly. In 1892, however, came a change; no longer was composition regarded as merely an incidental study, but a subject on a level with others in the curriculum. The superintendent reported the reorganization as follows:

A decided innovation has been made in our High School work. The matter of theme-writing and English composition has been made a full department of the High School work, and a teacher with no other responsibilities has been assigned to this work. At the same time, an attempt has been made, and with excellent success so far, to insure to the students the possession of ideas, impressions and thoughts before asking for their written expression. We are attempting to solve for secondary education that which Harvard college has settled for higher education -- how to teach agreeably, shortly and effectively the writing of good English.⁴

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1. Westfield reported composition in 1864. (See Ann. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Schools... of N.J. (1864), 174.) Perth Amboy, ten years later required "Declamation and composition in each of the classes every week." (See Ann. Rept. of the St. Bd. of Ed. and the Supt. of Pub. Instr. of N.J., 1874, App. 12-13.)
 2. Ann. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Schools of the St. of N.J. (1862), 160.
 3. Ann. Rept. of the St. Supt. of Pub. Inst. (1869), 115.
 4. Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... (1892), 71, App., 97.

A similar development took place in the Phillipsburg course of study. In 1875¹ no mention of the subject was made, but in 1880² it was specifically named in each of the four years of the high school. Princeton in 1895 recommended school publications as an aid to composition.³ A realization of the importance of English is evident in the curriculum revision reported by Bayonne in 1897, one of the main features of which was "much more thorough work in English." The aim of the board was expressed as follows:

When our children leave school we wish them to be able ... to express themselves clearly and grammatically in ordinary conversation, and to write a letter without mistakes in spelling, punctuation and the use of capitals.⁴

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1. Rept. of the St. Bd. of Ed... (1875), App., 23-24.
 2. Ibid., (1880), App., 18
 3. Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed., (1895), 276.
 4. Ibid., (1897), 203.

Although Passaic reported that its course was based on the recommendations of the Committee of Ten, the time allotment for English composition does not indicate that. One period a week was devoted to it throughout the course except in the last term when three periods a week were given over to the "preparation of the Graduate essay, Oration, or Thesis."¹ The Battin High School in Elizabeth reported,

English composition extends throughout the entire course. The third class is so divided that each pupil prepares a composition on some subject assigned, once a month. Besides this, exercises are required, using Chittenden's Composition as a guide.²

Flemington (1895)³ and New Brunswick (1898)⁴

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1. Ibid., (1895), 264-5.
 2. Ibid., (1895), 240.
 3. Ibid., (1895), 242.
 4. Ibid., (1898), 228-9.

taught composition throughout the four years. In the one-year commercial course at North Plainfield,¹ composition was a definite requirement, but there was no mention of the subject in the scientific course. Bloomfield² offered "English with Essays and Declamation."

Pennsylvania

The Franklin High School of Philadelphia, established in 1826, had weekly exercises in composition except in the first half of the first year when the work was oral. "Descriptive pieces" in the third quarter of the first year were followed by "narrative pieces" for the remainder of the year. In the second quarter of the intermediate year a course in the elementary principles of composition was given, the appendix to Murray's Grammar being used as a text.

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1. Ibid., (1898), 230.
 2. Ibid., (1899), 241.

The next term the compositions were "on themes selected."¹ The school attached considerable importance to language study, listing "a high degree of facility both in oral and written composition" as one of the skills "to be acquired by every youth who aims at success and usefulness in his future pursuits."²

The early courses of study of the Philadelphia Central High School, established in 1837, fail to mention composition, although the "English Language" was taught.³ The report of 1845, however, shows a half year devoted to "Composition and Rhetorical Analysis."⁴ In 1852 one hour a week was set aside for the study of composition in each of the four years.⁵ In 1880⁶ it was still listed for each year. As usual, composition received special attention in the Commercial Course, the report for 1898 recommending "Particular stress... upon composition work" in the first year.

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1. Amer. Jour. of Ed. (Russell's), III (Oct. 1828), 607-9.
 2. Ibid., 733.
 3. Edmonds, History of the Central High School of Phil., 62-63.
 4. Ann. Rept. of the Controllers of the Pub. Schs. of the City of Phil. (1845), 79-80. See Stout, op. cit., II.
 5. Edmonds, op. cit., App. G, I.
 6. Ibid., App. G, II.
 7. Ibid., App. G, III.

In the second year the study was continued, and in the third, rhetorical principles and essays were included.¹ The course of study for 1900 shows a considerable reduction in the amount of time spent on composition. Students in the Modern Language Course studied the subject one hour a week in the third and fourth years, whereas those in the Classical and Latin Scientific Courses were allotted only one period a week during the third year. Likewise, in the Commercial Course only one period a week during the first year was devoted to composition.² It is very likely, however, that essay work, in accordance with prevailing practice, was continued in connection with the literature study which found a place in every year of each course. Perhaps, too, the work in the languages, Latin, Greek, French, and German, of which each course had a share, was expected to furnish training in writing.

The High School for Girls, in 1867, offered "analysis and composition."³

The school reports of the 1880's show no particular emphasis on composition, for many of the schools

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1. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Inst. of ... Pa. (1898), 721.
 2. Edmonds, op. cit., Appendix G, III.
 3. Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XIX (1870), 550.

fail to mention it in the course of study. Only four name it at all, Allentown listing it for all three years,¹ Williamsport requiring declamation and composition once a month throughout the four years,² and Shamokin placing it in the first year.³ Corry in 1889⁴ reported increasing attention to English (including composition, rhetoric, and literature) which was taught throughout the first year and one-third of the second year.

From about 1890 on, literature figures largely in the reports, and school committees pride themselves on the growth of their libraries. Composition receives but scant attention. When it is taught,⁵ practice varies, Pottsville (1890)⁶ offering it in the senior class, Pottstown (1891)⁷ in the freshman, and Lancaster (1891)⁸ requiring "Composition and Declamation every alternate week," presumably throughout the course in both the boys' and girls' high schools. Prizes are

1. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Instr... (1882), 192-3.

2. Ibid., 264.

3. Ibid., 253.

4. Ibid., (1889), 122.

5. The following references to composition also occur in the school reports:

Bradford: four years of English, including daily compositions. Ibid., (1894), 137.

Norristown: composition "required throughout the course along with orthography. Ibid., (1894), 180.

Foster Township, Luzerne County: in the new high school at Woodside composition and orthography are in (Notes continued on page 150)

awarded in Ashland to stimulate composition work, and Miss Vergie Groff receives a Webster's Universal Dictionary "for having written the best impromptu essay on 'The Soliloquy of a School Desk.'"¹ Titusville, in 1895, makes no mention of composition, but has "Rhetoricals throughout the course."² Chester (1896) plans to teach composition in its new commercial course,³ while DuBois (1898) requires summaries of the classics read.⁴

At the very close of the century increased importance begins to be attached to composition, and several schools make a determined effort to improve the work. Williamsport encourages composition by daily rhetorical exercises, twenty-five minutes being spent on essays and orations at the opening of the session.⁵

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5. (Notes continued from page 149)
the course of study. Ibid., (1898), 199.
6. Ibid., (1890), 152. According to the report of 1896 (p. 195), English composition and rhetoric are still offered in the last year. In 1899, however, composition has been moved down to the second year, where it is required in all courses, General, Classical, and Teachers'. Ibid., (1899), 226-7.
7. Ibid., (1891), 161.
8. Ibid., (1891), 147.
1. (Notes to page 150)
Ibid., (1892), 133.
2. Ibid., (1895), 215.
3. Ibid., (1896), 151.
4. Ibid., (1898), 193.
5. Ibid., (1898), 266-7.

West Chester, too, has daily exercises in composition for three months of every year. The school report reads in part,

Composition is of sufficient importance to have it carefully and thoroughly taught by teachers who prepare themselves specially for the work. If our pupils express themselves badly in writing, no matter how well they have been taught and how fully they understand the subjects, they will not get credit for what they know nor will their teacher receive merit for her labors.¹

In the period under consideration it can scarcely be claimed that composition made very great progress, except in the larger schools, until the turn of the century. It was frequently found as a general exercise along with spelling, and sometimes, especially after 1890, in connection with literature. Commercial courses usually included it.

Delaware

The Wilmington Conference Academy, of Dover, in 1894 definitely scheduled a course in composition for the first year of the three year classical and scientific courses. "Exercises ... in declamation, composition, and elocution"² were required of all pupils

1. Ibid., (1898), 261-2.

2. Powell, History of Ed. in Del., 68.

in addition to the other prescribed subjects.

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

The status of composition teaching in the second half of the nineteenth century in the North Central States seems in general to have been similar to that in the New England and Middle States. In 1921 when Stout made a study of the development of the high school curricula in schools of the North Central section, he found¹ that in the period 1860 to 1890 composition, as a rule, was not included in the course of study, but was mentioned in a footnote along with such studies as declamation, spelling, and music. It varied from a weekly to a monthly exercise. Often it was taught in connection with another subject, first with grammar, then with rhetoric, and finally with literature. When it was not thus associated, he found that it was rarely placed in any year except the first, rhetoric being reserved for the second and third years, mainly the second. After 1880, rhetoric was more frequently found in the first year in conjunction with composition. In the early years of this period instruction in written

1. These findings are summarized from Stout, Development of High-School Curricula in the North Central States from 1860 to 1918, 56-57, 142-3.

expression was rarely provided in the classical course.¹
 In the later years composition lost its occasional character and was given a place in the curriculum, definite periods per week being assigned to it.

The extent of composition teaching² from 1860

1. Ibid., 89.

2. The following excerpts are from twenty-seven courses of study selected by Stout as typical of the years 1859 to 1900. Only three of them fail to mention composition. Note that from approximately 1880 on, there is a tendency to assign composition to a specific year. It must be borne in mind, however, that these courses are representative of the larger city schools rather than of the smaller, which were probably not able to offer so wide a range of work.

Ann Arbor, Mich., 1859: "Declamation and Composition semi-monthly." Stout, op. cit., 20.

Madison, Wisconsin, 1863: "Exercises in Declamation and composition weekly throughout the course." Ibid., 21.

Cincinnati, Ohio, 1862: "English Classics and Composition" for one hour a week during the second year and one half of the third. During the first half of the third year, the student is offered a choice of classics or composition. A footnote explains, "Beginning with the third year original addresses and essays will be required once in three weeks to the end of the course." Ibid., 21-22.

Leavenworth, Kansas, 1867: "Composition and Declamation weekly throughout the entire course." Ibid., 23.

Jacksonville, Illinois, 1869: "Reading, spelling, declamation, and composition continued throughout" both the English and Classical courses. Ibid., 23.

Waterloo, Iowa, 1870: "Penmanship, Declamation, and composition throughout the course." Ibid., 24.

Cincinnati, Ohio, 1872: Composition definitely assigned one hour a week every year except the first term of the third year. Ibid., 24-5.

Madison, Wisconsin, 1872: "Compositions, Declamations, Music, Drawing, and Reading throughout the course." Also given a definite place in the studies of the third term of the first and second years. Ibid., 25-6.
 (Note continued on page 154).

on is shown by Stout's figures. In the period 1860-85, 55% of the schools investigated mentioned composi-

(Note continued from page 153)

Chicago, Illinois, 1872: "Composition, drawing, and reading throughout the courses." Ibid., 26.

Columbus, Ohio, 1878: "Rhetorical Exercises once each week." Ibid., 27.

Oskaloosa, Iowa, 1876: English composition one-third of the first year. It was also probably part of the monthly "Literary exercises." Ibid., 27.

Springfield, Illinois, 1880: Scheduled for the first year of both the English and classical courses. Also "Declamation and Composition throughout the course" in the English department. Ibid., 27-28.

Auburn, Indiana, 1882: No mention of composition. Ibid., 28.

St. Louis, Missouri, 1881: "Theme writing throughout the last three years" of the English-Science Course. "Grammar and Composition" two-thirds of the first year in both the English-Science and German-English courses. "English Composition" one-third of the first year in the Latin-English course. Ibid., 29-30.

Sandusky, Ohio, 1889: "Elocution, Composition, and Music throughout the course." Ibid., 31.

Columbus, Ohio, 1889: No composition in the General Literature Course, but "English" mentioned in each of the four years. Composition in the first and third years of the English Course. The Business Course offers no composition, but lists "English" one term in each of the first three years. Ibid., 32-33.

Springfield, Illinois, 1890: "Industrial Drawing, Composition, and Rhetorical Exercises through the course." Ibid., 33.

Morrison, Illinois, 1888: No composition mentioned. Ibid., 34.

Attica, Indiana, 1895: Twice a week every year except the second, when only one day a week was devoted to it. Ibid., 34-5.

Evanston Township High School, 1894: No mention of composition, but "English" in the first term of the first year. In the second year "English alternating with drawing." Ibid., 35.

(Note continued on page 155).

tion in the course of study; 1866-70, 40%; 1871-75, 60%; 1876-80, 60%; 1881-85, 35%; 1886-90, 42%; 1891-95, 52½%; 1896-1900, 42%. These percentages are not exactly comparable because the same schools do not enter into all the computations, but they do indicate a tendency. The sudden drop of 24% from 1880 to 1885 may be partly accounted for by the increased use of the term "English", which included composition. In fact, the decrease of 10% in composition from 1895 to 1900 is exactly compensated by the increase in the use of the

(Note continued from page 154)

Chicago, Illinois, 1894: No mention of composition, but English given. Ibid., 36.

Chicago, Illinois, 1895: English High and Manual Training School: "Rhetoric and Composition" four times a week during the first year. A choice of English or French in the second and third years. Ibid., 37.

Wilmette, Illinois, 1898: Lockwood's Rhetoric the first year. Ibid., 37.

Columbus, Ohio, 1897: "English" four recitations a week the first three years of the General Literary Course. "English Essays" one hour a week in the senior year. In the English and Commercial Course four recitations a week in English in each year. Ibid., 38-39.

Jamestown, Ohio, 1896: "English" two recitations a week during the first three years, except in the second term of the first year when there were three. Ibid., 39.

Appleton, Wisconsin, 1900: English Composition two periods a week in all four courses, the Modern Classical, English, Commercial, and Manual Training. The English Course substituted "Rhetoric and Composition" for Latin in the second year; the Commercial Course, "English" for science. Ibid., 40-41.

term "English" for first-year work.¹

Stout attempted also to discover the amount of time devoted to composition in the period 1860-1900, although he recognized that his results could be only approximately correct because indications of time, especially in the earlier years, were very vague. He reported:

Average time approximately one year at the beginning and one year at the close. The latter was the highest average, the lowest being a trifle above one-third, 1866-70. The lowest maximum was one-half and the highest two years. The minimum was one-third throughout. The lowest and most frequent mode was one-third and the highest two-thirds. On the whole there was an increase in the time devoted to the subject.²

1. *Ibid.*, 77.

2. Stout, *op. cit.*, 102. The following table, summarized from Tables XX-XXVII, pp. 92-99, shows the variations in time devoted to composition from 1860 to 1900:

Table IV. -- Showing time in years devoted to composition from 1860 to 1900

Years	Number				
	of schools	Maximum	Minimum	Mode	Average
1860-65	11	2/3	1/3	1/3	3/7
1866-70	8	1/2	1/3	1/3	7/18
1871-75	12	2	1/3	1/3	5/9
1876-80	12	1	1/3	1/2	2/3
1881-85	8	1 2/3	1/3	1/3-1/2	3/5
1888-90	13	1	1/3	1/3	5/9
1891-95	20	1 1/2	1/3	2/3	7/12
1896-1900	17	2	1/3	1/3-2	1

SOUTHERN STATES

North Carolina

The number of private schools in North Carolina teaching composition increased steadily after 1820, both the boys' and girls' schools including it. Apparently it was not limited to a particular year of the course, for the announcements mention it in every class. The Warrenton Female Academy (1826) taught it throughout the course, "weekly" in the senior and second classes, and "once a fortnight" in the junior class. The freshmen studied "Elements of Composition".¹ This arrangement would suggest that in the first year there was regular course work in composition, probably involving the study of a textbook such as Irving's Elements of Composition.² The Hillsborough Female Seminary in 1825 also announced "Elements of Composition" in the first year.³ A similar practice evidently prevailed in the Salisbury Academy where in 1819 the girls of the first class "were examined on the rules of perspicuity and precision

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1. Coon, op. cit., 632. Ral. Reg., Apr. 13, 1826.
 2. The only composition book mentioned in the advertisements collected by Coon, op. cit., 775. Advertised by Joseph Gales in the Ral. Reg. various times in 1806.
 3. Ibid., 300. Ral. Reg., July 15, 1825. A notice of 1839 mentions composition in both the first and second classes. Ibid., 309., Ral. Reg., Feb. 25, 1839.

in composition, and the exercises corresponding with them."¹ The Raleigh Female Academy in 1832 placed letter writing in the second or middle class, and composition in the third (last) year.² "Composition in the English Language" was a study prescribed for the senior class of Berkeley's Literary and Scientific Institute.³ In her school at Raleigh, Mrs. Bowen taught composition in the "fourth class."⁴ Mrs. Saffery, also, who had adopted as the model for her female seminary in Greenville "the justly esteemed and much celebrated system of Mrs. Willard, the Superior of an establishment for education at Troy", included it in the fourth year.⁵ "To those far enough advanced, exercises in composition" were assigned in the Episcopal School of North Carolina.⁶ The "Plan of Education" of the New Bern Academy shows that in the female department compositions were required in the second, third, and fourth classes.⁷ No regular

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1. Ibid., 351. The Star, Feb. 18, 1820.
 2. Ibid., 556. Ral. Reg., Dec. 14, 1832. A report of an examination at an earlier date, 1824, shows that compositions were submitted in every year of the seven year course except the first and third. Ibid., 423-76. Ral. Reg., June 11, 1824.
 3. Ibid., 563. Ral. Reg., Jan. 27, 1831.
 4. Ibid., 566. The Star, Dec. 9, 1831.
 5. Ibid., 335. Ral. Reg., Apr. 28, 1835.
 6. Ibid., 542. Ral. Reg., Dec. 9, 1834.
 7. Ibid., 58.

course was followed in Williamsborough, where "Occasional exercises, in the intervals of study, in composition, in reading and commenting on the English Classics" were "resorted to, calculated to inspire a taste for polite Literature."¹ More regular was the assignment at the Repiton School, where there was "Composition once in two weeks."²

A growing realization of the importance of composition is indicated in items appearing in North Carolina newspapers. When in 1822 the Littleton Select School employed a young man from New York to conduct the male department, he undertook "to teach all the studies requisite for admission into any College in the United States, with the important additions, of Geography, Elocution, and Composition."³ So important did the trustees of the Lincolnton Female Academy consider composition that they ruled that failure to write and submit compositions as required be penalized by exclusion "from any marks of distinction or honor at the examination unless satisfactory excuses"⁴ were given for the delinquency. "The much neglected studies of

1. Ibid., 127. Ral. Reg., May 26, 1826.

2. Ibid., 274. Wilmington Weekly Chronicle, Sept. 16, 1840.

3. Ibid., 631. Ral. Reg., Nov. 15, 1822.

4. Ibid., 211.

composition and declamation" were to "receive more than an ordinary degree of attention" in the proposed Leasburg Classical School.¹ The Raleigh Academy, which in 1833 was one of the leading schools of the state, was commended in the local newspaper for the attention "bestowed upon those indispensable requisites, Arithmetic, Writing & Composition -- branches, which, in our higher schools, are too often entirely neglected."² It is evident, therefore, that although before 1850 composition may have been slighted in some of the schools, there was a growing consciousness of its value, and that in the better schools of the state it was always included.³

Virginia

Since public schools in Virginia developed very late, what composition teaching there was must be sought in the private schools, which offered mainly a

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1. Ibid., 32. The Star, Jan. 15, 1835.
 2. Ibid., 500. Ral. Reg., June 4, 1833.
 3. In spite of the growing importance of composition in the early part of the 19th century, that subject is rarely mentioned in the advertisements for teachers or positions in North Carolina. In the sixty-nine advertisements gathered by Coon for the years 1801-1840, only one makes mention of composition. Mr. A. Hart of Windsor, North Carolina, advertised in (Note continued on page 16b)

classical course in preparation for college. Consequently, composition is usually omitted. An exception is found in the Hampton-Sidney Academy (established in 1775), which, in 1824, required its students "to perform such exercises in elocution and composition as the Preceptor may direct."¹ This interest in composition is undoubtedly the result of Princeton influence, for many of the men concerned with the early history of the academy were graduates of the College of New Jersey. The encouragement given to the writing of the mother tongue by Princeton and the work done by one of its graduates has already been noted.² Samuel S. Smith, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, of which he was later president, and the first president of the Hampton-Sidney Academy, stated in 1776,

The system of education will resemble that which is adopted in the college of New Jersey, save that a more particular attention shall be paid to the cultivation of the English language, than is usually done in places of public education.³

3. (Note continued from page 160)

The Standard, March 13, 1835, that he was "qualified to teach all the useful branches of the Mathematics, English Composition, Geography, &c. &c." (See Coon, op. cit., 818.) English grammar, however, is frequently mentioned.

1. Morrison, Beginnings of Public Ed. in Va., 1776-1880, 105.

2. Cf. Chapter II, 37-40.

3. Morrison, Beginnings of Public Ed. in Va., 1776-1880, 105.

Other references to composition in Virginia confirm tendencies already noted, namely, to omit composition from the classical curriculum and to include it in the course of study for girls. The Latin school attended by Professor Edward S. Joynes about 1850 is reminiscent of the schools of the Colonial period. Latin and Greek, the major studies of the school, were taught by the usual drill and memoriter methods. "Of written exercises," he writes, "I never so much as heard."¹ The Female Academy at Sturgeonville, as early as 1828 was more progressive, for letter-writing was taught in the first year, and composition in the second and third.²

Mississippi

The girls who attended the Elizabeth Female Academy of Washington, Mississippi, in 1826, studied composition and at the commencement exhibition read essays.³ In 1851 composition and declamation were taught in the preparatory department of the Madison College at Sharon.⁴ Jefferson College (1899) in its high school department required, according to the announce-

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1. Heatwole, A History of Ed. in Va., 133-135.
 2. Amer. Jour. of Ed. (Russell's), III (Oct. 1828), 618-19.
 3. Mayes, Hist. of Ed. in Miss., 39-40.
 4. Ibid., 61.

ment, daily exercises in composition in both the scientific and classical courses.¹

Maryland

According to the school report of 1851, Baltimore gave attention to composition in the second, third, and fourth years.² A later report (1860) indicates that two periods a week were devoted to composition and declamation during the third and fourth years in the Central High School of Baltimore.³

Louisiana

In the high school department of Southern University, New Orleans, in 1889, composition was in the course of study for each of the three years.⁴

GENERAL

Evidence of the increased importance of composition after 1885 is seen in the fact that two teachers' associations made studies of the nature and extent of composition instruction just before the opening

1. Ibid., 37.

2. Stout, op. cit., 8-9.

3. Ibid., 9-10.

4. Fay, The Hist. of Ed. in La., 121.

of the last decade of the nineteenth century. At the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association in 1887, a committee was appointed "to consider the teaching of English in secondary schools, and to report upon the character and results of the work now done, its proper aim and scope, and the best method of dealing with the subject." Questionnaires were sent not only to the principals of a large number of the high schools and academies of Massachusetts, but also to the principals of about fifty of the more important high schools in other states.¹ Since the findings of the Massachusetts committee relate primarily to method, they will not be reported here. (See Chapter V, p.281-3) One item in the report of the committee of the Northern Illinois Teachers' Association presented at a meeting in March, 1889, is pertinent. Of the one hundred and thirty-five schools from various sections of the country, responding to the questionnaire, seventy-two reported a composition class. Essays were probably required in the rest of the schools, for one hundred and twenty-five schools answered the question relating to the frequency of composition writing.²

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1. Parmenter, C.W., Collar, Wm. C., and Groce, Byron, "English in Secondary Schools", The Academy, III (Jan. 1889), 599.
 2. Ray, W.H., Smith, Chas. A., Tucker, Carrie E., and Leslie, J.O., "English in the High School", The Academy, IV (Apr. 1889), 190-91.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN

English

The report of the Committee of Ten, appointed at the Saratoga meeting of the National Educational Association in July, 1892, for the purpose of studying the principal subjects entering into secondary school programmes, is momentous in the history of English teaching. Probably none of the recommendations were entirely new, having already been incorporated into the practice of the best schools. Individuals had at various times urged similar considerations; but there was needed some nationally representative body of sufficient prestige to command attention and insure compliance. The prime importance of the report as far as English is concerned is that it set up an authoritative standard.

The conference on English recognized a twofold aim in the teaching of English:

(1) to enable the pupil to understand the expressed thoughts of others and to give expression to thoughts of his own; and (2) to cultivate a taste for reading, to give the pupil some acquaintance with good literature, and to furnish him with the means of extending that acquaintance.¹

1. N.E.A., Rept. of the Com. on Sec. Sch. Studies, (1893), 86.

Although appointed to consider only the teaching of English in the high school, the conference chose to begin at a lower level, realizing that no program outlined for the secondary school would be effective without a suitable foundation. Hence, their recommendations for written composition begin with the third year of the elementary school.

The Conference asked for English in the high school as much time as was consumed by the study of Latin, five hours a week for four years. Three-fifths of this time should be devoted to the study of literature, that is, three hours a week for four years. Composition was accorded two hours a week during the first two years, and one hour a week during the last two. Grammar received one hour a week in the senior year, rhetoric a similar allotment in the junior year. The course in rhetoric was not given more time, since all that was contemplated was "a kind of codification of principles" deduced from the study of literature and "already applied in practice" in the first two years of composition.¹

In regard to composition as a college entrance

1. Ibid., 91-92.

requirement the Conference believed that admission should be based largely on the student's "ability to write English as shown in his examination-books on other subjects (such as history)."¹ The writing of set essays on books assigned they did not consider wise, since the student wrote not to set forth ideas, but to show his ability to write. They recommended instead questions on the literature read, requiring at least a page of the examination book. In addition to showing the knowledge of the pupil, such questions would test his ability to organize his information and to express himself clearly and concisely. Since the correction of specimens of bad English might do more harm than good, they recommended that such exercises form not more than one-fifth of the examination.

The publication of the report early in 1894 occasioned a great amount of discussion and criticism, which, as far as the English Conference was concerned, was mainly favorable. Nicholas Murray Butler, hailing the English report as revolutionary, said, it will put the mother-tongue where it ought to be, in the chief place in the curriculum, and displace mathematics and Latin, which, under existing arrangements, usually divide it between them.²

1. Ibid., 94.

2. Harper's Weekly, 38 (Jan. 13, 1894), 42.

In another article he wrote:

All this advice is so sound that, being now given a quasi-official authority, it should be followed generally in the secondary schools, both public and private.¹

The school reports of the later 90's show the influence of the Committee of Ten. Passaic, New Jersey, based its course on recommendations of that body, although it did not follow exactly the time allotments suggested. English composition was included every year for one period a week except in the last term when three periods each week were devoted to the preparation of a "Graduate Essay, Oration, or Thesis."² In Rhode Island, too, the effect of the report is seen. The superintendent of the Woonsocket schools recommended that the course of study be revised and that the requirement in English composition be "materially raised" to meet the standards of the Committee of Ten.³ Although the Warren report does not mention the Committee's recommendations, it very clearly shows their influence:

Language is now a study; and from the entrance upon school life until graduation from the high school there should be daily drill in the art of properly

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1. Butler, "The Reform of Secondary Education in the U.S.", Atlantic Monthly, 73 (Mar., 1894), 375.
 2. Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of N.J. (1895), 283-5.
 3. 25th Ann. Rept. of the State Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1895), App., 142.

expressing thought... The aim is more and more to make every lesson, even mathematics and geography, incidentally a lesson in the English language... Language should receive as much time and attention each day as any other regular study.¹

Again, in 1899, after a committee of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae had made a survey of the school curriculum in Rhode Island, it reported that in the seventeen high schools of the state, English received even more time than prescribed by the Committee of Ten.²

Although the sentiment of the private schools was also in favor of the report, they did not feel justified in making any changes until the colleges had expressed their approbation of the new plan. Cecil F.P. Bancroft of the Phillips Academy at Andover summarized the position of the endowed academies as follows:

The entrance gate to college is so straight, the authority of the college is so imposing, that no school can undertake to send up candidates after some other than the college standard, or persuade its pupils that there is a more excellent way.³

The colleges were not slow in signifying their attitude. Two organizations, the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland⁴

1. Ibid!, 139.

2. 30th Ann. Rept. of the State Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1900), "Report on High School Curricula", 2.

3. Bancroft, Cecil, "Report of the Com. of Ten from the Point of View of the Endowed Academies," Ed. Rev., (Note continued on page 170).

and the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools,¹ late in 1894 indicated their acceptance of the recommendations by adopting entrance requirements in close conformity with the suggestions of the Committee of Ten.

The effect of the report of the Committee of Ten on composition teaching is demonstrated in an article by Edwin G. Dexter, "Ten Years' Influence of the Report of the Committee of Ten."² In 1894, Dexter studied the English offering of eighty schools throughout the country; in 1904 that of one hundred and thirty-five. He discovered that although in 1904 the schools on the whole were not following in detail the recommendations of the committee, there was a general increase in the number of schools teaching English composition under that name. Whereas only 68% reported English composition in 1894, 84% reported it in 1904. In addition, the total amount of time devoted to it had

3. (Note continued from page 169)
VII (Mar., 1894), 283.

4. See Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Assoc. of Cols. and Prep. Schs. in the Mid. St. and Md. (1894), 61-94.

1. See Addresses and Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the New Eng. Assoc. of Cols. and Prep. Schs. (1894), 71-81.

2. The Sch. Rev., 14 (1906), 254-269.
/Apr.,

increased greatly. In 1894, 16% of schools gave more than a year (but not one and one-fifth years as recommended by the committee) to composition; in 1904, however, 80% were devoting more than a year to written expression.¹

With the report of the Committee of Ten composition may be said to have come of age. At last through the slow process of time had been achieved what Benjamin Franklin had tried arbitrarily to bring to pass in his academy in 1750. Composition had become a respected member of the high school family. It was still taught "throughout the year", but that phrase now took on a new significance. No longer did it imply occasional teaching as the moods of the teacher dictated, but rather regular, constant, and intensive application for four years. Composition was prescribed as an integral part of the work in English, entitled to three-tenths of the time devoted to that study. It gradually disappeared from the curriculum as a separate subject, and by 1900 was generally included under the blanket term "English."

2. Ibid., 258-59.

TEXTBOOKS

In 1832 Woodbridge, the editor of the American Annals of Education and Instruction found five composition texts extant.¹ Three of them, Bingham's Juvenile Letters, Irving's Elements of Composition, and Walker's Teacher's Assistant we have already noted in use before 1820. The two newcomers were Russell's Grammar of Composition (1823), and Parker's Progressive Exercises in English Composition (1832). These are both composition texts in the sense that they are concerned primarily with practice in written expression rather than with just the rules of writing. From the lack of reference to the first book, it is doubtful whether it achieved great popularity. Parker's book, however, took the country by storm. Shortly after the first edition appeared, the school committee of Boston authorized its use in the schools of the city.² Within six months, two editions had appeared³ and the publishers determined to stereotype it. In 1844 it was in its fortieth stereotype edition. There were new editions in 1855 and 56. The book enjoyed great popularity in England where it

1. Amer. Annals of Ed. and Instr., II (July, 1832), 377.

2. From an advertisement in the back of the edition of 1840.

3. Parker, op. cit., iv. 1840 edition.

was republished and stereotyped. By 1840 nine large editions had been sold there.¹ In 1844 Parker brought out his Aids to English Composition, which was designed as a sequel to Progressive Exercises. The Aids almost equalled its predecessor in popularity, for it reached its twentieth edition in 1852.²

The New York State Regents Reports show that for a number of years after the appearance of Parker's Progressive Exercises, it had the field almost entirely to itself. In 1836, thirteen schools reported the use of Parker, one of Irving, and two of Walker.³ For the next four years, only one school reported the use of the two latter books, and by 1841 they were no longer mentioned. Parker's book, however, had increased steadily in popularity, and in 1856, the approximate year

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1. Parker, Aids to English Comp. (1844), on reverse of title page.
 2. See The American Catalogue of Books, 121.
 3. Table IV -- Number of composition texts reported in use in New York State academies from 1836 to 1839.

	1836	1837	1838	1839
Parker	13	17	21	22
Irving	1	1	1	1
Walker	2	1	1	1

Table compiled from the Annual Reports of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, 1836-1839.

when the Regents temporarily discontinued their reports on the composition texts in use in the schools of New York State, was still in the lead.

The enthusiasm with which Parker's text was greeted does not mean that all schools immediately introduced it or any other textbook as the basis of the work in composition. The situation in New York State is probably typical. From 1836 to 1840 only 20 to 25% of the academies reported the use of a text. (See Table V, page 175) Those percentages do not change greatly until the 50's when there is a sudden increase. Within the space of twenty years the percentage of schools using composition texts is more than tripled.

Indications of an earlier introduction of composition into the school system are evident in the appearance of books to meet the needs of younger children. Two such books, profusely illustrated with pictures of animals and other familiar objects and scenes, were published in the 30's. Charles Morley's A Practical Guide to Composition, with Progressive Exercises in Prose and Poetry, 1838,¹ was followed in

1. The book was copyrighted in 1838; there was a Hartford edition in that year, followed by a New York edition in 1839.

Table V -- Percentage of schools reporting the use of a composition text book in New York State, 1836-1856.¹

Year	Total number of schools reporting	Total number of schools reporting a composition text	Per cent of schools using a composition text
1836	69	16	23
1837	74	19	25
1838	106	23	21
1839	119	24	20
1840	128	31	24
1841	131	35	26
1843	149	36	24
1844	146	32	21
1846	155	31	20
1847	156	29	19
1848	156	31	20
1849	160	62	39
1850	166	69	42
1851	168	92	55
1852	170	84	49
1853	170	111	65
1854	173	117	61
1855	165	118	71
1856	176	128	72

1. Compiled from the Annual Reports of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, 1836-56. Figures for the years 1842 and 1845 are not given because reports for those years were missing from the set used.

1839 by John Frost's Easy Exercises in Composition: Designed for the use of Beginners. In 1846 appeared Elizabeth Oram's First Lessons in English Grammar and Composition, a strange mixture of pronunciation, grammar, and composition. The 50's brought forth more books for beginners, the most popular of which was Quackenbos' First Lessons in Composition (1851). Designed, according to the preface, for pupils from nine to twelve, the book, however, rapidly made its way into the academies. Within a few years after its introduction into New York State academies it was offering serious competition to Parker's Progressive Exercises. Not as popular as Quackenbos were F. Brookfield's First Book in Composition (1855), the anonymous, My First Exercises in Composition Writing (1856), and Mrs. Spencer Smith's First Lessons in English Composition. Brookfield's book also found its way into some New York State academies as is shown by the Regents Reports. (See Table VII).

The decade 1840-49 did not offer any text-book for the academy to compete successfully with Parker's.¹ A few minor texts did appear. Especially notable, however, is the fact that the new grammars

1. Table VI - See page 177.

Table VI - Number of composition texts reported in use
in New York State academies from 1840 to 1849.

	1840	1841	1843	1844	1846	1847	1848	1849
Parker	28	32	34	30	27	23	25	51
Irving	1							
Walker	1							
Frost	1	2						
Perkins		1						
Connel			1					
Reed			1					
Boyd				2	4	6	5	7
Newman							1	2
Blair								1
Morgan								1

Table compiled from the Annual Reports of the Regents
of the University of the State of New York, 1840-1849.
Several of the texts reported here, such as Blair
and Newman, should be classed as rhetorics rather than
as compositions.

frequently included the term composition in their titles. That is the case in Peter Bullions' Practical Lessons in English Grammar and English Composition, 1844, which entered its sixth edition the next year, the tenth in 1849, and the thirteenth in 1851.¹ A new edition, revised and corrected, was copyrighted in 1853. The Reverend Bradford Frazee combines "elementary and progressive lessons in composition" with An Improved Grammar of the English Language, on the Inductive System (1845).² Another grammar with occasional exercises in composition is Allen H. Weld's English Grammar, illustrated by Exercises in Composition, Analyzing, and Parsing, a second edition of which appeared in 1847. An improved edition was copyrighted in 1849. In 1859 it was revised by G.P. Quackenbos. The books thus far noted for the decade 1840-49 are principally grammars. Three other books of this decade, to judge by the titles, concern themselves only with composition. Barnard includes in his list of American textbooks,³ Elements of English Composition (1846), by Eliphalet Nott. Alphonse Roux, of the Mt. Pleasant Academy (New York),

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1. See Barnard's list of American textbooks in his A. J. of Ed., XIII (March, 1863), section following p. 208.
 2. See The Com. Sch. Jour., VII (Sept. 15, 1845), 288.
 3. Barnard's A. J. of Ed., XIV (Dec., 1864), 776.

Table VII - Number of composition texts reported in use
in New York State academies from 1850 to 1856.

	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856
Parker	57	62	55	65	60	57	59
Preston	1						
Boyd	8	9	4	5	3	4	3
Blair	1	3					
Newman	2	3		2	3	1	1
Quackenbos		13	17	32	45	46	53
Roux		1	1	1	1	1	1
Whately		1	1				
Tucker			1	1	1	1	
Sweet			1				
Day			1	1			
Gallaudet			1	1			
Perkins				1	1		
Bullions				1			
Brewer				1			
Kames					1		
Trench					1	1	1
Latham					1	1	1
Brookfield						4	9
Town						1	

Table compiled from the Annual Reports of the Regents
of the University of the State of New York, 1850-56.
Here, as in the previous table, many of the books
listed are formal rhetorics rather than compositions.

published in 1847 New Zetetic Method for English Composition, which does not seem to have attained great popularity. In New York State it was never reported in use by more than one academy, probably the one in which the author taught. Another book in Barnard's list is Prac.[tice] Book of Comooosition by Edward A. Morgan, which appeared in 1847.¹

The 50's were apparently not very prolific. However, one book of that period practically had a monopoly of the composition field for the next quarter of a century.² That was Advanced Course of Composition and Rhetoric by G.P.Quackenbos (1854).² In 1855 Tower and Tweed copyrighted their Grammar of Composition, which a review in the Connecticut Common School Journal highly commended.³ Barnard lists Rhetoric and Composition by A.S.Welch, New York, 1859.⁴

Since Quackenbos' book apparently met the demands of the academies so adequately, the next decade brought forth no books that seriously challenged its supremacy. Boyd, the author of a fairly popular rhetoric,

1. Ibid., 773.

3. Op. cit., III (July, 1856), 224.

2. See Table VII, p. 179.

4. Barnard's A. J. of Ed. XV (Sept., 1865), 569.

entered the composition field in 1860 with Elements of English Composition, the copyright on which was renewed in 1888. Pinneo's Guide to Composition (©1864) was planned for very young writers. Designed as an aid to teachers rather than as a textbook for pupils is Davis' Composition Writing: A Practical Guide, containing Model Lessons and Hints to Teachers and Pupils.¹

The opening of the next decade witnessed the publication of two texts by John S. Hart, First Lessons in Composition and A Manual of Composition and Rhetoric.

The former is a book of elementary exercises designed to lead the child gradually to the study of grammar and rhetoric. The latter, although it includes composition in the title, is more concerned with rhetoric. It gained favor rapidly, and within ten years it was more widely used in New York State than Quackenbos' Advanced Course. Two more books of the rhetorical type appeared before the end of the decade, The Principles of Rhetoric by Adam S. Hill, professor at Harvard, and Elements of Rhetoric and Composition by David J. Hill of the University of Lewisburg. The former scarcely deserves mention

1. Barnard includes in his list of American textbooks three books for which no dates are given, but which belong to the period before 1865. They are as follows: A.R. Phippen, Illustrated Composition Book New York (ibid., XV, 544); Joseph W. Wright, Rules for Composition (ibid., XV, 574); Nett, Eliphalet, First Lessons in English Composition (ibid., XIV, 276).

in a list of composition texts, since it concerns itself entirely with the principles of communication and not at all with helping the student to find something to say. The book was, however, a favorite in private schools, particularly in those preparing for Harvard. D.J.Hill's book is in one respect in decided contrast to the Principles of Rhetoric as well as to all the preceding combined compositions and rhetorics. It begins where the student has to begin in writing, with the search for a subject and then goes on to show the student how to develop his topic. Some indication of its popularity is found in the fact that it was reported the most widely used rhetoric in the schools of New York State for the years 1893-98, supplanting Hart, which had been the leader.

There are two more outstanding books that belong to the 70's, different, however, from the other composition texts of this period in that they relate composition to grammar rather than to rhetoric. In 1874 Swinton published the first of his popular series of language lessons in which he attempted to teach grammar not by rule and definition but through practice in writing. The first of the series was Language Primer,

designed for beginners. This was followed by Language Lessons: An Introductory Grammar and Composition for Intermediate and Grammar Grades (©1873). School Composition, the third book of the series was planned as an advanced textbook for grammar schools, but in 1877 was revised under the title A School Manual of Composition for Advanced Grammar Grades, and for High Schools, Academies, etc. Progressive Grammar completed the series. Reed and Kellogg, following in the footsteps of Swinton, likewise stress practice in Higher Lessons in English: A Work on English Grammar and Composition (©1877). It rapidly became the favorite grammar text, retaining its popularity well into the twentieth century. Revised editions appeared in 1885 and 1896, followed by a new large type edition in 1909.

The decade 1880-89 produced several texts. Brainerd Kellogg, in 1880, published A Text-Book on Rhetoric, supplementing the development of the Science with Exhaustive practice in composition. The "exhaustive practice" is rather disappointing, for the exercises are limited to sentences illustrative of principles. There is no provision for practice in extended composition. Although the book found some favor in the last two decades of the nineteenth

century, it never became as popular as the Reed and Kellogg text. In 1818 fifty-seven of one hundred and eighteen school reporting a composition text named Shaw,¹ the most popular of the seventeen books used. Although the name of the book is not given, it is in all probability Edward R. Shaw's Selections for Written Reproduction,² published in 1886. Another widely used text of the last two decades is Lucy A. Chittenden's The Elements of English Composition. Appearing first in 1884, it reached its sixth edition in 1885. The title of Sara E. Lockwood's Text, Lessons in English (1886) reflects the growing tendency to organize the work in language and literature in one English course rather than in separate departments of grammar, rhetoric, and so forth. The sub-title, "adapted to the study of American classics", is indicative of the close association that was developing between the teaching of literature and composition. The book was accorded a warm welcome in schools and academies in various parts of the country. In New York State it was by far the most popular composition text in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

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1. In 1888 the Northern Illinois High School Teachers' Association made a survey of English in high schools both within and without the state. (See Ray, W.H., et. al., "English in the High School," The Academy (May 1889), 200.
 2. The complete title of the book is Selections for Written Reproduction, designed as an aid to composition, writing, and language study. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1886.

Table VIII -- Number of composition texts reported in use in New York State academies from 1890 to 1899.

	90-1	91-2	92-3	93-4	94-5	95-6	96-7	97-8	98-9
Lockwood	58	97	97	137	161	148	164	136	133
Hart	27	32	24	28	19	19	12	9	13
Chittenden	27	29	31	26	23	22	16	20	23
Williams		6	13	23	18	29	26	24	21
Kellogg	21	20	11	12					7
Welch	8	9	11	12	15	24	27	34	42
Hill, D.J.	17	12	9	11	19	31	31	29	28
Reed and Kellogg			8	8	7	7	27	19	28
Swinton	7	8	8	7	8	8	10	8	10
Keeler and Davis			5	6		9	5	14	14
Waddy					7	21	25	31	28
Maxwell					6	5	10	9	6
Scott and Denney								8	11
Shaw							6	8	10
Quackenbos						5	6	5	5
Lewis									5

Only textbooks mentioned five or more times are included in this list. Between 1890 and 1894 nine other authors were reported by twenty-eight schools; from 1894 to 1899, fifteen other textbooks by twenty-four schools. Figures for the years 1890-94 are taken from the Second Annual Report of the Examination Department of the University of the State of New York (1894), 765; the remainder are from the Seventh Annual Report of the High School Department of the University of the State of New York (1899), 1034.

The number of composition texts appearing between 1890 and 1899 attests to the renewed interest in the teaching of written expression at that time. None of the new books, however, offered very serious competition to the two leaders, Lockwood and Hart. In 1890 appeared Composition Exercises by Irene Hardy. In the same year William Williams published his Composition and Rhetoric by practice, with exercises adapted for use in high schools and colleges. A new edition appeared in 1896. Exercises in Rhetoric and English Composition, by C.R.Carpenter, was copyrighted in 1891. A sixth, enlarged, edition was put on the market in 1896. The year 1892 brought forth E.R.Shaw's English Composition by Practice. The New York State Regents Reports do not show that it was very popular in that state.¹ It is interesting to note that the books mentioned thus far for this decade stress the element of practice in composition by use of either that word or the word exercises in the title. The same tendency is evident in Newcomer's, A Practical Course in English Composition (1892), a book omitting rules and aiding the student in finding something to say. His later Elements of Rhetoric: A Course in Plain Prose

1. See Table VIII.

Composition (1898), is designed for more advanced students. William H. Maxwell's First Book in English was copyrighted in 1894. In New York State it was one of the less frequently used books. Near the close of the decade appeared a book which was to prove popular well into the next century, Scott and Denney's Composition-Rhetoric (1897). As is indicated by the title, the authors sought to bring about a close relationship between theory and practice. The publication of a second edition in 1898 indicates that the schools were in sympathy with that idea.

CONCLUSIONS

1820-1900

I. About 1820 the status of composition in the secondary schools was strengthened by the establishment of high schools which had in view the preparation of pupils for all the needs of life. By 1867 the larger schools almost invariably included the study of composition.¹

1. Barnard in his survey of city curricula in 1867 found that composition was included in the official regulations of twenty-four out of thirty cities. The following cities required it: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dubuque, Fond du Lac, Indianapolis, Louisville, Madison, Manchester, Mass., New York, New Haven, Newark, Niles, Mich., Philadelphia, Portland, Providence, San Francisco, St. Louis, Terre Haute, Troy, N.Y., (Note continued on page 188)

Not until after 1875, however, when grammar had subsided in importance,¹ was more attention accorded it, as is shown by the school reports. In the 90's it made tremendous gains. Composition, as part of the general English question, was a major subject of discussions which eventuated in measures establishing it as a regular study in the curriculum. The Regents of New York in 1890 included composition on the list of Regents subjects. The Harvard reports from 1892 on called attention to the inadequacy of the instruction in composition in the preparatory schools.² Early in February of 1893 the Cornell faculty voted to discon-

1. (Note continued from page 187)
 Washington, D.C., and Worcester. (See Barnard's Amer. Jour. of Ed., XIX (1870), 463.) Of the six that failed to mention it, -- Cambridge, Hartford, Lewiston, Rochester, N.Y., Sandusky, and Springfield, Ill., -- two certainly taught it. Hartford had introduced it as early as 1847, and the records for 1872 show that it was still being taught at that time. In Rochester, N.Y., according to the Annual Report of the Regents, 1867, (p. 408) both the Female Academy and the Free Academy reported exercises in composition, the former every two weeks, the latter weekly.

1. Professor Lyman, in his historical study of English grammar (op. cit., 9) concluded that "After 1875, with the subsidence of grammar to its correct place as an incidental study, composition gained in strength."
2. See Chapter IV.

tinue certificates in English from private schools.¹ Close upon this came the action of the Regents requiring three years of satisfactory teaching of English, especially composition, in all high schools and academies of the University. In July, at the annual convocation of the Regents, composition was an important topic.² The associations of colleges and preparatory schools, both in New England³ and in the Middle States⁴ devoted a large share of their meetings to the subject. The climax was reached in the publication of the Report of the Committee of Ten in January, 1894, whereupon more discussion followed. One important outcome of the conference reports was the establishment of uniform entrance requirements in English for the New England and Middle States.⁵ There is little doubt that the decade 1890-99 was an eventful and fruitful one in the history of composition.

II. Although before 1830 it was sometimes listed in the course of study along with such subjects as algebra

1. See Chapter IV.

2. 107th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1893), 411-450.

3. Addresses and Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the New Eng. Assoc. of Col. and Prep. Schs. (1893), 38-83.

4. Assoc. of the Col. and Prep. Schs. in the Mid. States and Md., Proceedings of the 1st Ann. Conv. (1893), 84-108.

5. See Chapter IV.

and history, it was most likely to be found in a footnote along with declamation, or perhaps music and spelling. In either case, the teaching was usually of an occasional nature, exercises being assigned from one to four times a month. This rather casual treatment of the subject persisted even to the close of the century in some schools. Long before that time, however, approximately 1850, the more progressive schools had introduced composition into the curriculum as a regular subject of instruction. Placed commonly in the first or second year of the high school, it was intended to provide the student with the fundamentals for the occasional theme work of the remaining years. Although very few schools indicated the amount of time devoted to the course, it would appear that the common practice was to accord it one, or at most two, periods a week.

III. Until well into the 30's it was frequently omitted from the studies of the classical department. At that time, as a result of pressure from the colleges, preparatory schools began to take the subject more seriously.

IV. In the girls schools it was usually a regular part of the work, being taught instead of declamation.

- V. The commercial courses, which were introduced in the second half of the century, often only of one year's duration, as a rule required composition.
- VI. It was first stipulated as a requirement for graduation in 1877, when New York designated "Rhetoric and Composition" as a pre-requisite for the three-year certificate. In 1894 proficiency in composition became necessary for the Regents diploma.
- VII. Toward the close of the century composition lost its identity as a separate subject, becoming merged with the other English subjects. The Report of the Committee of Ten and the increased pressure of the colleges were largely responsible for the establishment of composition as an important part of the English work.
- VIII. The survey of composition texts shows that no important efforts appeared until 1832 when Parker published his Progressive Exercises. The number of adoptions of the book from 1832 on gives evidence of renewed interest in composition teaching. The assumption of responsibility for training in written expression by the elementary schools is indicated by the publication of books for younger pupils, beginning about 1838. That composition instruction was still of a very formal type is witnessed by the popularity of Quackenbos'

Advanced Composition and Rhetoric from 1854 on. A reorganization of courses of study, especially in the elementary schools, is indicated by the popularity of Swinton's series of language books, the principle of which was imitated by Reed and Kellogg. The increased importance attached to composition during the last ten or fifteen years of the century is evident from the number of textbooks which appeared. A tendency toward a less formal type of instruction is manifest in the emphasis on practical work.

CHAPTER IV

The Influence of College Entrance Requirements
on Composition Teaching

Although occasionally before 1870 some college may have exerted its influence in favor of composition teaching, not until that year did proficiency in writing the mother tongue become a requirement for entrance. Then it was that Princeton, which as early as 1778 had urged upon teachers the importance of cultivating the mother tongue, prescribed a "Short and Simple English Composition."¹ More important, however, in the history of entrance requirements in English is the action of Harvard three years later, for the plan announced in the catalogue of 1873-4 became the model for colleges throughout the United States.

The subject of English had been mentioned in the Harvard catalogue as early as 1865, an inconspicuous note at the end of the list of prescribed subjects calling attention to the fact that "Candidates will also be examined in reading English aloud."² In 1869 the

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1. Catalogue of the Col. of N. J., 1870-'71, 27.
 2. "History of the Requirement in English for Admission to Harv. Col." in *Twenty Years of School and College English*, Appendix, 55.

subject had increased in importance sufficiently to receive the heading "English", under which followed the announcement:

Students are also required to be examined, as early as possible after their admission, in reading English. Prizes will be awarded for excellence. For 1870 students may prepare themselves in Craik's English of Shakespeare (Julius Caesar) or in Milton's Comus. Attention to Derivations and Critical Analysis is recommended.¹

It was not until 1872 that the quality of the candidate's written expression was considered. To emphasize the notice, it was printed in italics with a little hand in the left margin to insure attention to it:

Correct spelling, punctuation, and expression, as well as legible handwriting, are expected of all applicants for admission; and failure in any of these particulars will be taken into account at the examination.²

In 1874 the writing of a composition became an established part of the entrance requirement. The catalogue for 1873-74 announced:

English Composition. Each candidate will be required to write a short English Composition, correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and expression, the subject to be taken from such works of standard authors as shall be announced from time to time. The subject for 1874 will be taken from one of the following works: Shakespeare's Tempest, Julius Caesar, and Merchant of Venice; Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield; Scott's Ivanhoe, and Lay of the Last Minstrel.³

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1. Ibid., 55.
 2. Ibid., 55.
 3. Ibid., 55.

No change occurred until 1878 when correctness in "division by paragraphs" was added.¹

The following year candidates were admonished to be familiar with all the books in the list. A new feature, exceedingly popular in entrance examinations for some ten years to come, was introduced in 1882, the correction of specimens of bad English, for which an additional half hour was added to the examination already one hour in length.²

In order to insure continuity in the English work, candidates after 1887 were to take the examination only as a final.³ It had previously been permitted as a preliminary, which many students passed at the end of the junior year. Under the new system it was the hope of the college that the student would have the benefit of an added year's training in the preparatory school. An

1. Ibid., 55.

2. Ibid., 56.

3. Ibid., 56.

addition in the catalogue for 1891-92 stressed the importance of good English in all written work, not just in set essays:

The English written by a candidate in any of his examination-books may be regarded as part of his examination in English, in case the evidence afforded by the examination-book in English is insufficient.¹

Two years later Harvard took a definite stand on the controversial subject of the relative importance of language and literature:

The candidate is expected to read intelligently all the books prescribed. He should read them as he reads other books; he will be expected not to know them minutely, but to have freshly in mind their

1. Ibid., 56.

most important parts. Whatever the subject of the composition, the examiner will regard knowledge of the book as less important than ability to write English.¹

After 1896, when the preliminary examination in English was restored as an alternative to the final, the requirements conformed to those set by the Joint Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English. (See appendix B).

The examination papers set before 1896 were of the same general character, calling for a short composition on some subject chosen from the books prescribed for the year. In 1882 sentences for correction appeared. In 1896 the examination was divided into two parts, the first consisting of general questions on books prescribed for reading, the second of more searching questions on books listed for careful study. The longer set essay now gave place to questions (or topics) requiring an answer of one or two paragraphs.²

Gradually other colleges followed Harvard's

1. *Ibid.*, 56.

2. See Appendix C for specimen examination papers from 1874 to 1896.

example and introduced a composition requirement. Nightingale, who in 1879 compiled the requirements of forty-four colleges¹ in the United States as a guide to candidates for college, showed that seven colleges, Boston University² (beginning 1881), Brown University³, Michigan State University,⁴ Minnesota State University,⁵ Simpson Centenary College,⁶ Tufts College,⁷ and the Illinois Industrial University,⁸ prescribed it. Two others, California State University at Oakland⁹ and the Iowa State University¹⁰ required a study of a specific textbook, Hart's Composition and Rhetoric.

Columbia and Cornell added composition to the list of required subjects in 1882, and Yale in 1894. The report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1896-97 shows that of the 475 colleges investigated, representing 28 states, 87 conformed to

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1. Although the requirements of Harvard are given, composition is omitted, probably through an oversight.
 2. "A Brief essay on some theme to be announced at time of examination." Nightingale, Requirements for Admission to the Colleges of the U.S., 10-11.
 3. "Exercises in English composition" as a prerequisite for the Scientific course. Ibid., 10-11.
 4. "In English language, each candidate will be required to write not less than two pages (foolscap), correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc., on a subject assigned at time of examination." Ibid., 17.
 5. "English Composition and Rhetoric." Ibid., 16-17.
 6. "Composition and Rhetoric." Ibid., 20-21.
 7. "A brief essay on some standard work in English literature, subjects announced in each annual catalogue." Ibid., 20-21.

(Notes continued on page 199)

the recommendations of the Joint Conference, and 232 mentioned composition as a requisition. Some did not specifically list composition, but required the study of some book such as Lockwood's Elements of English.¹

Many of the colleges that introduced composition imitated in its general features the plan evolved by Harvard. The development of the requirement at Cornell illustrates that conformity as well as certain deviations. When first introduced in 1882, composition was linked with grammar, an essay being prescribed "as a test of the candidate's knowledge of spelling, punctuation, the use of capitals, and elementary English construction." Topics of a general nature were set, or, if the candidate preferred, the examiner would assign a subject from one of the books prescribed for that year.² The character of the examination remained

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8. (Notes continued from page 198)
 "Elements of English Composition." Ibid., 14-15.
 9. Ibid., 10-11.
 10. Ibid., 14-15.

1. Harris, Wm. T., "Requirements for Admission to Freshman Class in Colleges, Universities, and Schools of Technology", Rept. of the Commissioner of Education (1896-97), 457 ff.
 2. The Cornell Univ. Register (1882-83), 27.

about the same until 1888 when the announcement was made that a composition of not less than 300 words, "correct in grammar, and properly punctuated and paragraphed", would be "required on some subject assigned at the time of the examination."¹ The topics were all to be based on the books prescribed for reading. The practical nature of the requirement was emphasized by the added statement:

It is the special aim of the examination to test the candidate's practical rather than his theoretical knowledge of English, though the latter is taken due account of.²

The great importance that Cornell attached to a correct use of the mother tongue was further indicated by the announcement that "No student markedly deficient in English will be admitted to any of the courses in the University."³ In 1889 the correction of specimens of bad English became a part of the examination,⁴ continuing until 1892, when it was dropped. The next change came in 1893 when a dual aim was announced:

The object of the examination is to test the candidate's ability to express himself clearly and correctly: also, to test his familiarity with the works prescribed.⁵

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1. Ibid., (1888-89), 137. See Appendix D for specimens of examination papers.
 2. Ibid., (1888-89), 138.
 3. Ibid., (1888-89), 138.
 4. Ibid., (1889-90), 143.
 5. Ibid., (1893-94), 31. See Appendix D for specimen examination.

Consequently the examination was in two parts, the first a series of questions upon the prescribed books, the second, three essays of 300 words each on topics taken from the remaining books on the list. Composition was evidently still of greater importance to the examiners than a knowledge of literature, for the greater part of the time was accorded it. Two hours were to be devoted to composition, one to the questions on the books. In that same year Cornell decreed that school certificates would not be accepted in place of the entrance examination in English; neither would Regents' diplomas unless they covered six academic English counts, including English composition.¹ In that way Cornell hoped to raise the standards of instruction in the high schools and academies from which she drew her students. From 1895 the examination followed in general the recommendations of the Joint Conference:

One hour of the examination is assigned to answering questions upon the books marked A. Two more hours are occupied with writing three essays (250 words each) upon subjects taken from the books marked B.²

Exemption from part one could be claimed by students

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1. Ibid., (1893-94), 31.
 2. Ibid., (1895-96), 30.

from schools having the certificate privilege by submitting specimens of the school work on the books studied. The interest of Cornell in power of expression rather than in knowledge of literature is seen in the retention of the long essays in part two, a practice which had been condemned by both the Committee of Ten and the Joint Conference. The catalogue of 1898 left no doubt as to Cornell's purpose:

The examination is not designed to test the candidate's familiarity with the history of English literature or with the minutiae of the books prescribed, but to test his ability to express himself readily and easily in accordance with the usages of ordinary prose composition. To this end the candidate is urgently advised:

- a. To train himself in writing concise paragraphs in answer to questions upon the most striking narrative and descriptive incidents in the books of the A-list.
- b. To master more systematically the contents of the books of the B-list, endeavoring to retain a knowledge of each as an organized whole. This will be best secured by writing numerous essays or compositions of considerable length upon the general purport of each book.
- c. To cultivate in all his writing the habits of correct grammar and spelling (including proper names characteristic of the book read), of correct sentence-structure, punctuation, and paragraphing.
- d. To avoid most carefully the error of believing that the mere oral memorizing of the contents of the book prescribed is the kind of preparation desired. The candidate is expected to learn from these books the art of expressing himself.

In every case the University examiner will treat mere knowledge of the books as less important than the ability to write good English.¹

1. Ibid., (1898-99), 34.

Cornell, like Harvard, insisted that students above all master the mechanics of the language before gaining admission. A knowledge of literature they relegated to second place.

Not all entrance requirements were in as close agreement as those of Harvard and Cornell. Consequently, a serious problem was created for secondary schools preparing candidates for a number of different institutions. The first effort to deal with the problem was made at a conference of professors of English, representing several New England colleges, held at Trinity College, Hartford, in December, 1879.¹ The principle of the Harvard requirements was adopted and the books announced in the Harvard catalogue for 1881, 1882, and 1883 accepted. It was this conference which suggested as a further test the correction of specimens of bad English, a practice rapidly accepted by other colleges and one which was later much criticised and finally abandoned. The result of the Hartford conference was practical uniformity in the New England colleges with the exception of Yale.

The question was next taken up by the Commission

1. Ann. Repts. of the Pres. and Treas. of Harvard College (1886-87), 5.

of Colleges in New England at the request of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools in 1888. No material changes occurred at this time in regard to literature, but the following suggestions were made to the colleges in regard to the language requirement:

that the subjects of the short composition required in the examination in English be always simple; -- that the bad English sentences given for correction should not include sentences the meaning of which is obscure; -- and that a recommendation to teachers of secondary schools be made in each college catalogue to the effect that the use of simple and idiomatic English in translation be insisted on.¹

It was further recommended that the subjects for compositions be drawn from two or three books on the list instead of being limited to one as was often the case, the time allowed for the examination was extended to two hours, and English was placed on the list of final subjects for admission to college. At least three consecutive years of study should precede the examination.² Since all but five of the New England colleges belonged to the Commission, the action taken insured a fair degree of uniformity for that section of the country.

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1. The New Eng. Assoc. of Col. and Prep. Schs., Addresses and Proceedings at the Third Ann. Meeting (1888), 54.
 2. Ibid., 55-56.

The most far-reaching revisions were those brought about by the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, which in 1893 appointed a committee to investigate the suggestions. At the first meeting of the committee in February, 1894, the recommendations of the Committee of Ten of the National Educational Association were in the main endorsed. In regard to language they favored particularly the following:

That the candidate's proficiency in composition should be judged from his answers to the questions set, which should be so framed as to require answers of some length and to test his power of applying the principles of composition.

That formal grammar and exercises in the correction of incorrect English should in no case be more than a subordinate part of the examination.¹

To the next meeting, held in Philadelphia in May 1894, were invited representatives of the Commission of Colleges of New England and the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of New England. This Joint Conference had the task of reconciling the views of two opposed groups, the one stressing language, the other literature. The literature group, led by Yale,

1. "Summary of the Proc. of the Meetings of the Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English, 1894-99." See Univ. of the State of New York, Sixth Annual Report of the High School Department (1898), I, 842.

objected to the use of the books merely as sources for themes marked not for the knowledge of literature exhibited but for proficiency in composition. The language group, to which Harvard and Cornell belonged, was interested mainly in power of expression. A compromise was reached by dividing the list of books into two groups, one for reading, and the other for careful study. In keeping with the first recommendation of the Committee of Ten quoted above, topics demanding an answer of one or two paragraphs were to be set on both lists. The answers to the first part were to be judged mainly for composition ability, to the second for knowledge of the books studied. Correction of specimens of bad English was excluded from the examination.¹

The Joint Conference in December, 1897, instead of setting up additional requirements came to the aid of the preparatory schools with suggestions relating to the amount of time to be devoted to English and the general method to be employed in meeting the requirements. It is interesting to note that, following the lead of the Committee of Ten, the confere-

1. Ibid., 843. See Appendix B for the complete recommendations and requirements.

ference urged attention to language "throughout the high school course". The three suggestions in regard to method indicate the usual rather formal treatment of the subject. A new trend, however, is evident in the proposal that students base their written work not solely on the books read, but also on their own thoughts and experiences. The recommendations relating to language are as follows:

That, where careful instruction in idiomatic English translation is not given, supplementary work to secure an equivalent training in diction and in sentence-structure be offered throughout the high school course.

That definite instruction be given in the choice of words, in the structure of sentences and of paragraphs, and in the simple forms of narration, description, exposition and argument. Such instruction should begin early in the high school course.

That systematic training in speaking and writing English be given throughout the entire school course. That, in the high school, subjects for composition be taken, partly from the prescribed books, and partly from the student's own thought and experience.¹

Meeting with general favor, the entrance requirements set up by the conference in 1895 within three years were approved by 87 colleges in all parts of the country.² Even Yale at last fell into line. The North Central Association, which sent delegates to the second meeting of the conference in May, 1895,

1. Ibid., 850.

2. Harris, op. cit., 457.

approved the requirements in general. When, in 1897, the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Southern States also sent representatives, nation-wide uniformity seemed within reach.

There remained, however, one large group of schools that had not been brought within the fold -- those of the West. In general they approved the requirements of the New England Association as far as they went, but believed they were not stringent enough. They maintained that the preparatory schools should accomplish more in language training, and relegated to them responsibility for the content of what was usually known as Freshman English. Indiana University in 1894 reported such a practice:

The bugbear known generally in our colleges as Freshman English is now a part of our entrance requirements, and university instruction in composition begins with those fortunate students who have some little control of their native language when a pen is placed between their fingers.¹

The importance of composition was emphasized by the fact that all entering students took an examination in English composition even if they had been admitted on certificate in other subjects.²

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1. Sampson, Martin W., "English at Indiana Univ.", The Dial, XVII (July, 1894), 5.
 2. Jones, "College-Entrance English." Examination Bulletin #13, June 1897, in Univ. of the S. of N.Y., Examination Dept., Fourth Annual Rept., (1896), 638.

Leland Stanford considered that composition was not receiving its due, that too much emphasis was being placed on themes from books. Consequently it announced that essays would be required on topics not previously named. Such practical problems as business letters or narratives from personal experience would be set. There was no nominal increase in the requirement, but by increasing the severity of the examination, it was hoped to raise the standard of instruction in the preparatory schools. Like Indiana, Leland Stanford turned over to the high school the work of training in the elementary phases of composition.¹

The University of California declared that its requirements were 50% more severe than those of the New England Association. Greek, Norse, and German mythology, arguments and orations, and English poetry were added to the prescription in literature. In 1894 the university signified itself well pleased with the work done in literature, but hoped to raise the composition standards.² It stimulated better

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1. See Lathrop, H.B., "Ent. Exams. in Eng. at Stanford." Ed. Rev., VI (Oct. 1893), 289.
 2. The relative emphasis placed on literature and composition in at least one California school is evident in the following account: "The English training which I received was given in California (Note continued on page 210).

2. (Note continued from page 209)
 schools, and so was different from that in the Eastern States. The primary object in the instruction was to prepare pupils for the entrance examinations of the two universities there, Stanford and the University of California. As these examinations differ greatly from those of Eastern colleges and universities, the method of teaching in the preparatory schools also is different.

"The English entrance examinations of those Western colleges call for a thorough study of the books and also of mythology rather than for an ability to write English. Accordingly, the object with which we studied English was to be able to give the meaning of all allusions, to explain all the figures of speech, and to parse any phrase in the books we had had. The writing we did was confined almost exclusively to paraphrases with once a great while a synopsis of some part of our reading." See Harvard University, Rept. of the Committee on Comp. and Rhet. to the Board of Overseers of Harvard Col., (1897), 515, No. 156.

Far different was the experience of another California student who spent four years studying English literature and the ways of writing English:

"During my first year, in High School, the class studied some of the more difficult points of English grammar, with a little rhetoric. Occasionally, we had to write short compositions, which were corrected by the teacher, but were not rewritten ...

"The second year, we were taught, with the help of a very long outline, which we had to learn by heart, the principles of perspicuity. The long outline we learned; the principles we learned to recite, much as a child may learn to recite a piece of German, the meaning of which he has not the slightest idea... Beside the outline, we had some work in books, learning whether the matter therein contained was perspicuous, or not. Our exercise in writing, that year, was rather slight.

"The work of the third and fourth years was on about the same plan. Our teacher, a graduate of [a female] college, was an enthusiast, a crank, on the subject of outlines. She gave us outlines on perspicuity, outlines on force, outlines on elegance, versification, argumentation, exposition, and narration, and
 (Note continued on page 211).

preparatory work by its system of accrediting whereby schools sent with their annual applications sample compositions and other exercises. If these were satisfactory, an inspector was sent to the school to scrutinize more closely the work of the teachers and pupils. Candidates from non-accredited schools were, of course, required to take the regular examinations in literature, rhetoric, and composition.¹ Here again it is evident that composition work was being pushed down into the high school.

The western colleges openly avowed their disagreement with the requirements of the New England Association. The situation was further complicated by the varying interpretations which the subscribing colleges placed upon the recommendations. Richard Jones, "literature inspector" of the University of the State of New York, presented the problem forcefully

2. (Note continued from page 210).
 outlines on description. We got to calling her, after a while, 'the walking outline.' I do remember that she once gave us an outline on the best method of writing a composition, which we never wrote." Ibid., 435, No. 24.

1. Gayley, Charles Mills, "English in the University of California," The Dial, XVII (July 16, 1894), 29-30.

in his pamphlet on "College-Entrance English." A study of entrance requirements and examination papers of colleges throughout the country showed varying degrees of emphasis on literature and composition. Harvard, Cornell, and Dartmouth rated ability to write correct English above knowledge of the prescribed texts.¹ Other colleges apparently considered a minute knowledge of the books the great desideratum. Some made no mention of a theme requirement at all, perhaps considering the paper as a whole a test of written expression. The much heralded uniformity when subjected to close scrutiny proved to be so in name only. A number of colleges had agreed to limit their examinations to certain books in given years --- that was the extent of the uniformity.

One more attempt was made in the nineteenth century to bring order out of the chaos. The National Educational Association appointed in 1895 a committee to investigate the general subject of college entrance requirements. In a preliminary report² listing entrance requirements of sixty-seven colleges and universities

1. Jones, op. cit., 535.

2. Published in the Sch. Rev., IV (June, 1896), 341 ff.

of the United States, no attention was given to English since the committee considered the question satisfactorily settled, at least temporarily, by the recommendations of the Joint Conference. When, however, the final report was made in 1899, English was accorded much space, a detailed course of study for literature and composition being submitted.¹ The composition work was still organized on rather formal principles with emphasis on mechanics, but enslavement of composition to literature was lessened by deferring literary topics to the third year of the course. Subsequent discussion of the plan showed that it was admired as being valuable and suggestive, but educators did not feel it would be generally accepted since it was too hard to carry out in practice. The National Educational Association report of 1899 is the last important attempt to bring about uniformity in entrance requirements in English composition. Since its influence does not become manifest until the twentieth century, further discussion of the report is not within the scope of this study.

We have followed the history of college entrance requirements in composition from the simple

1. N.E.A., Rept. of the Com. on Col. Ent. Req., (1899), 12-19.

prescription of Princeton in 1870 to the detailed program of the National Educational Association in 1899. We have witnessed the struggles of the colleges to secure better preparatory training in composition, and the establishment of a uniformity that was not uniformity. What was the effect of these new and conflicting requirements on the teaching of composition in the secondary schools?

When, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the secondary schools suddenly found themselves confronted by an additional requirement, they were resentful. Where in the already crowded curriculum given over to intensive drill in Latin, Greek, and mathematics were they to find time for composition exercises? That this attitude persisted even down to the last decade of the century becomes apparent when one reads the statements of students in the Harvard Reports.¹ Time allotted to English in the

1. Early in the 90's Harvard became concerned about the very elementary nature of the work which it was necessary to carry on in Freshman English. Consequently a committee of three alumni was appointed who investigated the methods employed by the preparatory schools. In order to secure the necessary information, students were required to write compositions about their preparatory training in English. The results of the investigation (Note continued on page 215).

program would be pre-empted by Latin and Greek.¹

Frequently English would be neglected until the last

1. (Note continued from page 214)

tion were presented in three separate reports, which appeared in 1892, 1895, and 1897. The first and last dealt mainly with conditions of secondary school teaching as revealed by the compositions; the second was devoted to specimens of translations from Latin and Greek written in Harvard entrance examinations.

Their publication was followed by a flood of comment in educational gatherings, newspapers, and periodicals, which served to put a spotlight on the "illiteracy of the American boy." Many schoolmasters objected to the method employed by Mr. Adams' "detective agency" in gathering information about the preparatory schools. It was urged that college students who had for a year or more heard their instructors find fault with their preparatory school training were not dependable sources of information. Furthermore, the reports are occasionally highly contradictory, students from the same school reporting entirely different amounts of composition required. Hence, only those parts of the report will be quoted here which are confirmed either by frequent mention on the part of students or by evidence from other sources.

1. "When I entered upon the work of the fourth year, I began to think of the preliminary examinations which were to be held the following June. The teachers seemed to have the same subject in mind, and the only hour which had been set apart for the study of English was now devoted to Algebra and Geometry.

"At the beginning of the last year I thought that English would be taken up more systematically than before; but, to my surprise, Latin, Greek, and Geometry occupied nearly all of the time."

(See Harvard University, Rept. of the Com on Comp. [1892], 132.

(Note continued on page 216).

year of the course, and then four years' work would be crammed into one. The teacher in a large and well-equipped city school wrote, "Our school is unwilling to give me more than a year for preparing my scholars for college. In this one year I must rush them through all the books."¹

Some schoolmasters refused to take the new requirements seriously. Why bother to teach the mother-tongue, which the child had been practicing ever since he had lisped his first syllables? This attitude was furthermore confirmed by the reputed laxity of colleges in accepting students whose written expression was far from satisfactory. Wilson Farrand of the Newark Academy, New Jersey, in a paper read

1. (Note continued from page 215)

A student at another school had a similar experience: "On the programme of the school there was one recitation period a week, of forty minutes' duration, assigned to English. This period was generally stolen for Latin." *Ibid.*, Appendix, #12, pp. 16-17.

Still a third reported: "At one time, Prof. ---- started the practice of once a week devoting fifteen minutes of the Latin hour to the writing of short exercises; but owing to the scarcity of time this was done only once." *Ibid.*, 125.

1. Quoted by Professor J.M.Hart in a letter to Richard Jones. See Jones, *op. cit.*, 581. The students reported the same practice. A graduate of a
(Note continued on page 217)

before the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools in the Middle States and Maryland in 1893, described the attitude as follows:

... there is a prevalent opinion among our pupils that the entrance examinations in English are not very rigidly enforced at most colleges. They have a strong impression, based on the experience of those who have gone before, that if a boy can get through the other subjects decently, defective English will prove but a slight barrier. This is the impression, I say, among the boys, and those of their teachers who have a high regard for strict veracity are careful not to be too positive in their contradictions.¹

1. (Note continued from page 217)

Massachusetts city school wrote: "In the last year's study all our energies were devoted towards the English required for Admission to College." Harvard Univ., Rept. of the Comm. on Comp. and Rhet. (1897), 483, #102. In another high school in Massachusetts the students were trained in the correction of false syntax during the first year. "The 'college section' of the class now enjoyed a well-earned respite of two years from the study of English -- a period of relaxation more agreeable to the young student's blissful ignorance than profitable to his literary style ... It is only fair to say at this point, however, that all the rest of the class, the 'regulars,' had provided for them excellent English courses; in the second year, Rhetoric, and in the third and fourth years, English Literature. The College section could not be included in these courses because of their extensive preparation work for college.

"In our Senior year, we of the elect resumed our acquaintance with the Queen's English; and sad to say, this year's work, prescribed by the colleges for admission was exactly the same as our first year's work. We had to operate once a week on monstrosities of composition -- artificial monstrosities, too -- and to correct grotesque punctuation. Besides this, we read the prescribed books ... indeed, we read so fast that we thought of nothing more than remembering the narrative or plot long enough to write a connected account." Ibid., 453-54, #56.

1. (Note on page 218)

Cornell University made the following confession:

At present our English department closes one eye, if not both, to many short-comings and sins. It 'passes' papers which it would like to 'condition'; it 'conditions' some the writers of which it would like to reject outright.¹

It is not surprising, therefore, to find the master of one fitting school admitting that he attempted no instruction in English: "I tell the boys to read the books, and that is all."²

Even more demoralizing than the laxity of the colleges was the diversity in entrance requirements. Some colleges insisted upon topics drawn from books; others frowned upon such literary studies and preferred subjects based upon personal experiences. Drill on mere mechanical elements satisfied the requirements of this institution: that one believed that the "final test of a candidate's ability to write adequately is ...

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1. (Note continued from page 217)
Association of the Col. and Prep. Schs. in the Mid. States and Md., Proceedings of the 1st Annual Convention (1893), 103.
 1. Professor J.M.Hart in a letter to Richard Jones. See Jones, op. cit., 584.
 2. Quoted by Beers, "Entrance Requirements in Eng. at Yale", Ed. Rev., III (May, 1892), 435, footnote. The Report of the Harvard Com. on Comp. and Rhet. 1892, 130, reveals a similar attitude on the part of the student. One of them, a high school graduate, wrote, "The opinion that scholars held of English was: 'Oh, I can pass in that all right without any study.'"

power to construct a well-proportioned essay, and in revision to see his subject as a whole."¹ Since most of the schools fitted students for more than one college, it became necessary to vary the instruction in accordance with the destination of the pupil. Wilson Farrand, in the paper already referred to, presented vividly the distracting effect of the variety of requirements:

I am at present directing the English work of a class preparing to enter college next June. The class is small enough to be readily handled as a whole in its Latin, Greek and mathematical work. When it comes to English, however, I am compelled to divide it into four distinct sections, and to carry on four parallel courses, simply because the boys in that class are going to five different colleges. Then the confusion is still further confounded by the fact that some of the boys must be prepared for an examination in formal grammar, some for an exercise in correcting false syntax, some for both and some for neither.²

His vigorous plea was responsible for the Joint Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English. How little real uniformity was achieved has already been demonstrated.

Another bad effect of the entrance requirements was the pointing of the whole instruction in

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1. Part of the requirement of the University of Chicago. See "The Preparatory course in English," Sch. Rev., V (Sept., 1897), 445-455.
 2. Assoc. of the Col. and Prep. Schs. in the Mid. S. and Md., Proceedings (1893), 104-5.

composition toward the examination. Boys were not practiced in writing in order to learn how to express themselves well, but in order to pass an examination. The following statements are typical of those found in the Harvard reports (1897):

I was often told at the New Hampshire Academy where I was prepared :- "Now, this is simply to make you ready for the examination, you'll probably forget all about it afterwards."

Finally in the sixth year they tried to make up for lost time in teaching English. They seemed to teach it to us for the sole purpose of making us pass the examination, because they continually used examination papers as references and they said all the time that we must do this or that if we expected to pass the examination.

1. Harvard Univ., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet., (1897), 441, #34.

2. Ibid., 443, #39. The following references also occur in the reports:

"All the instructor had on his mind was the entrance examination. He talked of nothing else and would inform us of this and that, that would please or displease the instructor." A New Hampshire Academy. Ibid., 441, #53.

"[Her] main object is to teach [the student] enough English to pass his examination, and then she gracefully drops him." A private school in New York City. Ibid., 443, #38.

"During my last year at school I prepared for the entrance examination in English. The preparation consisted in reading the required books, and writing a two to four page theme once a week, on some subject taken from the prescribed books. The only purpose of this composition work, was to enable me to pass the examination in Entrance English." Private school in Boston. Ibid., 457, #62.
(Note continued on page 221)

Since the dominant aim of preparatory instruction in composition was to fit the candidate for the examination, it followed that the instruction was limited to those things definitely required by the higher institutions. In the first place, the colleges prescribed a list of books from which composition subjects would be taken. Hence, preparatory instruction was committed to the close association of language and literature. Secondly, the colleges emphasized mechanical correctness of expression to the exclusion of almost every other consideration. Consequently, fitting school teachers expended red ink on commas,

2. (Note continued from page 220)

"Professor -----'s object in teaching English is to prepare men for the entrance examination to Harvard College; he told us the fact on the first day and four years later ended his goodbys by giving directions how to pass the examinations most successfully." *A New Hampshire Academy. Ibid., 513, #153.*

The public schools were under the same spell, as is shown by the statement of a student from a Massachusetts city Latin School: "It seems to me that the all pervading idea at the school was not so much to give us a lasting knowledge of the English language, but rather to force enough of the rudiments of the language into our heads so that we should be able to pass the examinations for Harvard. When we made a mistake in anything the teacher would say that they marked this very hard at Harvard; instead of merely telling us that it was bad English." *Ibid., 443. #40.*

capitals, cases, and tenses, but very little on the thought and structure of the composition as a whole.

Language and literature might have been mutually helpful if they had been correctly taught, but in the majority of schools instruction lapsed into a routine of reading followed by the writing of compositions on what had been read.¹ Literature came to be regarded as a source of composition topics. Reading, instead of being a pleasurable experience became drudgery. When the compositions assigned were critical or imitative of the style of the author, the results were still more lamentable. Yet the colleges themselves fostered the critical bent by the questions which appeared on the examinations; for example:

What is the dramatic purpose of Antonio's intercession with Shylock after the time of the bond has expired?²

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1. The following statements typify the practice in the schools:

"My preparation in English composition at ----- School consisted in writing about seven compositions during the year. These compositions were simply outlines of the story in each one of the books appointed as subjects for the Harvard examination in English." A New Hamp. School. Harvard Univ., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. [1892], 147-8.

"Every week, and sometimes oftener, we were required to write a resume of the book we were reading, an account of the author's life, to describe some event in it, or give our impressions of the writer's style." A Chicago school. Ibid., (1897), 473, #82.

2. (Note on page 223)

The literary methods of Defoe as shown in the History of the plague.¹

Assignment of compositions in imitation of an author's style resulted in an artificial, rhetorical manner that was usually highly rewarded by the teacher.²

Compositions written either on literary or general subjects were as a rule criticized merely for mechanical errors. Correct spelling, capitalization,

2. (Note continued from page 222)

From a Teachers College, Columbia University, examination. See Jones, op. cit., 603. That Teachers College specifically required critical treatment is seen in the following statement: "In addition to the usual demand that the candidate shall write clear and accurate English, correct in spelling, sentence-structure and paragraphs, it is required of him that he show some elementary power in criticism; that he be able to tell by what means the author has made effective the presentation of his ideas..." Ibid., 603.

1. From a Dartmouth College examination. Ibid., 620.

2. In a high school near Boston the pupils were required to put their thoughts "into words in the peculiar swing of each author's style." Harv. Univ., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. (1897) 503, #140.

Another student reported, "On looking over my themes, I find those that got the highest marks, written in a stilted high-flown imitation of Macaulay, who was revealed before our dazzled eyes as the 'Apothesis [sic] of Style.' Of the other themes, one especially in which I managed to get down a little nearer nature was scarlet with its shame." Ibid., 503, #142.

punctuation, and grammar became the ultimate ends of the teaching. Anything devoid of error, no matter how wooden and stilted was deemed satisfactory, if not rated excellent. The nature of the instruction in one Massachusetts high school is described thus:

No attempt was made to develop originality of thought and expression or to stimulate the imagination by the setting of good models. It was a dreary, mechanical drudgery, unlighted by a single gleam of interest.¹

Similar evidence is offered by another student. Speaking of the compositions written every four or five weeks, he says,

The character of these productions depends entirely upon the writer's natural ability. There is no discussion, no re-writing; the criticism consists merely of reading the sheet over and marking a few of the most glaring errors. When this has been done, the student's production is returned to him (sometimes) marked anywhere from 4 to 10, the grade depending almost entirely upon bare mechanical correctness. The science of word-choice and arrangement seems to be an unknown quantity. The character of the subject is usually left to the student.²

The entrance examination papers written by students reflected this training. Professor A.S.Hill, who from 1873 to 1884 read four to five thousand English examination books at Harvard, found not more than a

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1. Harvard Univ., Rept. of the Com on Comp. and Rhet. (1897), 428, #8.
 2. Ibid., [1892], 137-8.

hundred which were creditable to either the teacher or the pupil. Commenting on the "tedious mediocrity" reported by an examination reader in 1885, Professor Hill said,

It is this tedious mediocrity which has amazed me year after year. In spelling, punctuation, and grammar some of the books are a little worse than the mass, and some a great deal better; but in other respects there is a dead level, unvaried by a fresh thought or an individual expression.¹

Sadly enough, the colleges by their constant emphasis on "a short English composition, correct in spelling, punctuation, division by paragraphs and expression"² encouraged the teaching that produced such mediocrity. The warning of the Joint Conference that "No candidate will be accepted in English whose work is notably defective in point of spelling, punctuation, idiom or division into paragraphs"³ set no higher standard. That inquisitorial body, the Harvard Committee on Composition and Rhetoric limited its criticisms to errors in spelling, grammar, and slovenliness in composition. In fact, it declared that the

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1. Hill, A.S., "English in the Schools", Harper's, 71 (June 1885), 124.
 2. From the Harvard requirements for admission for 1878-80. See Leighton, Harv. Exam. Papers, 399.
 3. "Summary of the Proceedings of the Meetings of the Conf. on Uniform Entrance Req. in Eng." in Univ. of the State of N. Y., High School Dept., Sixth Annual Rept. (1898), Appendix, 843.

high school had no concern with anything beyond the mechanics of composition.

The province of the preparatory schools is to train the scholar, boy or girl, and train him or her thoroughly, in what can only be described as the elements and rudiments of written expression, -- and they should teach facile, clear penmanship, correct spelling, simple grammatical construction, and neat workmanlike, mechanical execution ... Its end is to so train the child, muscularly and mentally, from its earliest years, that when it completes its school education he or she may be able on occasion to talk with the pen as well as with the tongue, -- in other words to make a plain, clear, simple statement of any matter under consideration, neatly written, correctly spelled, grammatically expressed.

The committee, forgetting the close association of form and content, proposed that if the high school supplied the former, the college would take care of the latter. Boys of secondary school age could not possibly have anything interesting to say; so it devolved upon the fitting schools to drive them through the sheer drudgery of technical drill.

Added emphasis was given to the mechanical side of expression in 1879 by requiring the students in the entrance examination to correct specimens of bad English. Ten or more sentences, frequently culled from the preceding year's examination books, were given, in

1. Harv. Univ., Rept. of the Com on Comp. and Rhet.
(1897), 421-22.

which the student was to correct all the errors he could discover.¹ To meet this requirement the preparatory schools devoted occasional recitations to the correction of faulty sentences. "The last year, Strang's book of errors in English for correction was discussed on perhaps eight Mondays" wrote one student.² In another school, during the last two years pupils were required to correct "in writing, ten bad English sentences every Monday."³ There was much criticism of the "bad English" requirement not alone because it set before students examples of poor English, but also because the sentences were so confused and the meaning so obscure that a fair test was not afforded. The Committee of Ten in 1893 expressed a mild disapproval when it recommended that such exercises form not more than one-fifth of the examination. The Joint Conference in 1894 recommended their omission, conceding at the same time that the exercise was useful in preparatory study.

Bungling as were the early efforts of the colleges to secure adequate training in written expression

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1. See Appendix C for specimen of examination.
 2. Harv. Univ., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. [1892], App., 23, #15.
 3. Ibid., App., 27, #18.

in the secondary schools, they were not without their value. They helped along the movement for good English which had already been initiated by the academies and high schools, by focussing attention upon it. It is true that composition teaching in the 90's was in a very chaotic state, that no valid method had been evolved, but the experiments, successful and unsuccessful, of the colleges and secondary schools, furnished the foundation for the development of sounder principles in the next century.

CHAPTER V

The Development of Method in
Composition Teaching

To attempt a discussion of method in connection with a subject so incidental in its nature as composition is almost presumptuous. Yet, since the subject found a place in the curriculum, it is obvious that some sort of procedure was employed in teaching it. School reports, contemporary accounts of individuals, textbooks, and treatises on methods have furnished the material for this chapter. After a preliminary discussion of the objectives and the underlying theories, the methods themselves are examined. Because it is difficult to trace any single line of development in composition teaching, since the subject was at times associated with other studies, methods are discussed under several different heads. The teaching of English composition in connection with the classical languages is considered in the section on translation. Then the procedures employed in teaching composition as an independent subject are examined. Next its association with grammar, rhetoric, and literature is studied through textbooks. And, finally, supplementary aids used to stimulate interest in composi-

tion are considered. The picture on the whole is a chaotic one, but it must be so if it is to mirror faithfully the methods of composition teaching before 1900.

Aims

When composition entered the curriculum, first, of the academy, and later, of the high school, education was dominated by the theory of formal mental discipline. The classical languages and mathematics, because of their formal organization, were the favorite subjects for training the faculties. Any study that was merely useful was scorned by the disciplinarians and became established in the curriculum only with great difficulty. When Franklin, recognizing the practical value of composition, attempted to introduce it into his academy, it was gradually crowded out by the classicists. In the high schools, where it was grudgingly granted a part of the time previously allotted to the ancient languages and to mathematics, it was frequently neglected because of the pressure of college entrance preparation. If, therefore, composition was to survive in the secondary course of study, it must prove itself as effective a disciplinarian as the

traditional subjects. And so it came about that composition, introduced into schools for utilitarian reasons, sought to justify its presence on the ground that it offered opportunities for mental gymnastics comparable to those afforded by Latin, Greek, and algebra.

Although the old faculty psychology upon which the principle of formal discipline was based began to be questioned early in the nineteenth century, educators were slow to accept the new theories and advanced at the close of the century the very same arguments brought forward in an earlier decade in support of composition. In 1824 J. M. Keagy asserted that

all the powers of the mind are very much improved by the influence of correct language. That the attention becomes more capable of fixing itself, that the memory, as a matter of course, is rendered stronger and more retentive; that the judgment and rational faculty are all invigorated by the use of precise and well defined terms.¹

He recommended particularly a study of the properties of objects, comparison, classifications, antonyms, synonyms, and word association, a practice which

1. K[eagy], J. M., An Essay on English Education Together with Some Observations on the Present Mode of Teaching the English Language, 6.

will be of such great value in reference to the reasonings of common life, that we will venture to place it on a level with mathematical researches; and though it does not arrive at the same certainty, yet it gives equal exercise to the powers of memory, judgment and reasoning, with the most accurate course of geometrical or algebraical analysis.¹

As late as 1892 the Committee of Ten felt obligated to defend English (composition and literature) on the score of disciplinary value. Although the Conference on English had not predicated a disciplinary aim in the English report, the Committee discovered one:

The intelligent reader of the report of the Conference will find described in it the means by which the study of English in secondary schools is to be made the equal of any other study in disciplinary or developing power.²

The Committee on College Entrance Requirements of the National Educational Association in 1899 presented as its first proposition "that the study of the English language and its literature is inferior to no study in the curriculum. It offers all, or nearly all, the opportunities for mental training afforded by the study of any language..."³

On the title-page of William Russell's A Grammar of Composition (1823), one of the earliest composition texts in use in this country, occurs the

1. Ibid., 18.

2. N.E.A., Rept. of the Com. on Sec. Sch. Studies (1893), 21.

3. N.E.A., Rept. of Com. on Col. Ent. Req. (1899), 12-13.

following significant statement:

All that regards the study of composition, merits the highest attention on this account, that it is intimately connected with the improvement of our intellectual powers.

Richard Whately in his Elements of Rhetoric, a textbook popular in the first half of the nineteenth century, found the same value in composition. Although the body of his text is entirely devoted to a discussion of rhetorical principles, he does find occasion in his introduction to say a word in favor of composition. Practice, he says, should accompany a study of principles. No topics are suggested, however, since the subject, he believes, is unimportant; in fact, the topic chosen may even be insignificant, for "the benefit proposed does not consist in the intrinsic value of the composition, but in the exercise to the pupil's mind."¹

As a result of the disciplinary aim, cultivation of the power of expression became secondary to developing reasoning ability. Training in composition was confused with logic, as is indicated by the close association of the two subjects in some courses of study. The New York State Board of Regents in making its report on subjects studied in academies from 1804-1807

1. Op. cit., 30.

did not discriminate between logic, rhetoric, and composition, but grouped the three in giving statistics.¹ In 1867, in the Cincinnati High School, "Mental Science and Composition" were combined in the third and fourth years.²

About 1880 an additional aim became evident in secondary school composition. Accuracy, which had long been the ideal of the study of grammar, was taken over by composition teaching. The thought content of essays was neglected, and they became mere exercises for drill in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. This new emphasis was undoubtedly a reaction to the former practice of requiring composition of an abstract, philosophical nature. Teachers, beginning to realize the absurdity of expecting adult reasoning from immature high school students, turned to more simple, familiar subjects. They still felt, however, the obligation of making composition a difficult subject. Since the subject matter was no longer a source of mental discipline, they turned to the form. Training in accuracy now supplanted the more general training of the faculties. The new aim in composition teaching is set forth in the Woonsocket, Rhode Island, report for

1. See Chapter II, 44.

2. B's. A.J. of Ed., XIX (1870), 532.

1879:

It has been the aim of the teachers not to accept any piece of composition, until each word has been spelled correctly, and all the more important rules of punctuation carefully observed. By this method of instruction, practical work is obtained, and attention is the more readily given to correctness of expression, which, in a high school course, is of infinitely more importance than originality or profundity of thought.¹

A similar disregard of content is found in the New York State syllabus (1891), which was careful to list the kinds of composition required, narrative, descriptive, persuasive, argumentative, but as for content made no requirement beyond the very formal "logical sequence of ideas",² insisting at the same time on correctness in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The Report of the Committee of Ten (1892) also contains no reference to the thought content of compositions.

The result of such training is reflected in the mechanical writing of high school graduates. One of the Harvard examiners reported in 1891 that the boys tried to write proper English at the expense of simplicity, naturalness, and ease.³ The colleges, however, were largely responsible for the state of

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1. 12th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed... of R.I. (1882), App., 95.
 2. 105th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1891), 14.
 3. Huribut, B.S., "The Preparatory Work in English as Seen by a Harvard Examiner" in Twenty Years of School and College English, 45.

affairs, since they encouraged the emphasis on correctness by limiting their requirements to technical considerations. The criticisms in the Harvard reports, already discussed in Chapter IV, were levelled almost entirely at errors in form.

This new emphasis did not go entirely unchallenged. At the first annual convention of the College Association of the Middle States and Maryland (1889), Professor Charles E. Hart of Rutgers College, scored the demand for the sort of composition training which "limits itself ... to a negative excellence in the mere avoidance of errors."¹ Principal C. T. R. Smith, at a conference of the Associated Academic Principals (1892), criticised the New York State syllabus for setting no definite standards in English composition. He recommended

that in the examination in English composition more regard be paid to the thought than has hitherto been the case; that we ask them [the Regents] to give credit not merely for punctuation and spelling and matters of mechanical work, but also to the thought of the essay...²

In spite of the occasional objections voiced, the mania for accuracy persisted to the close of the

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1. Hart, Charles E., "The Scope and Function of Rhet. and Comp." in Proceedings of the 4th Ann. Conv. of the Col. Assoc. of the Mid. States and Md. (1892), 35.
 2. 106th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1892), 542-43. The Regents apparently heeded the suggestion, for the syllabus of 1895 does take content somewhat into consideration. See Chapter III, p. 139.

century, although the character of instruction did change somewhat. Correctness of detail was extended to correctness of larger units -- the sentence, the paragraph, and the composition as a whole. For example, the New York State syllabus of 1895 stipulates special attention to the paragraph in first year work.¹ The Committee on College Entrance Requirements of the National Educational Association (1899) recommends "a study of the structure of the sentence and of the larger units of discourse."² Attention to the larger unit, however, did not, on the whole, carry with it attention to the content, but the emphasis remained where it had previously been, on the mechanical aspects of the composition.

Not until the twentieth century did schools in general realize that the purpose of composition is to enable pupils to communicate effectively thought and feeling. The art of expression was until the last two decades of the nineteenth century slighted. Undue emphasis was placed upon thought, not as a preliminary to expression, but as a means of developing the mental powers. In other words, composition was considered a

1. Univ. of the S. of N.Y., 2nd Ann. Rept. of the Exam. Dept. (1894), 292-3.

2. N.E.A., Rept. of Com. on Col. Ent. Req. (1899), 13.

tool subject, not for the conveyance of ideas, but for the sharpening of the wits. When, about 1880, it began to be recognized as a tool of expression, there resulted a fanatical devotion to form and an almost total disregard of matter.

Principles versus Practice

Far into the nineteenth century the way to learn to write English was to memorize faithfully the rules of grammar and rhetoric, and to supplement this study with formal essays written at irregular intervals throughout the year. Schoolmasters considered this the logical way to achieve skill in expression, for they held a knowledge of theory fundamental to the practice of any art. When they placed principles before practice, they were merely placing first things first.

When Franklin planned the course of English studies for his academy, he followed the same order. After a two year study of grammar, followed by a year of rhetoric, the boy was to be put to letter writing, in which he was to receive instruction in the various social forms, in addition to business letters. Finally, in the fifth year he was to be set to the writing of essays, the substance for which might be furnished by

the master if the boy was not mature enough to write original compositions.¹

When William Russell, who was reputed to be an excellent teacher of English, wrote his Grammar of Composition in 1823, he proceeded on the same principle. In order that the student have the rules of rhetoric fresh in mind, he placed a summary of them directly before his course of composition lessons. The purpose of his book, as he explained in the preface, was to bridge the gap between theory and practice.² That Russell even considered the necessity of bridging the [redacted] shows him well in advance of his time.

Quackenbos, the author of some of the most widely used textbooks in the second half of the nineteenth century, likewise believed that the student must have a preliminary course in rhetoric before beginning to write. Nor is any general survey of rhetorical principles sufficient, but rather a minute study of "every important subject connected with the art"³ of rhetoric. Hence it is that practical exercises in composition are deferred until page 325

1. See Chapter II, p. 31.

2. Op. cit., vii.

3. Quackenbos, Adv. Course of Comp. and Rhet., 6.

of his 454-page book. Earlier than that he includes sentence drill, but gives no exercises in connected composition.

Adherence to the theory of principles before practice relieved the elementary schools of any responsibility in the practice of composition. Their business was to cram the child with the grammatical rules he would need when finally he came to the business of writing. Even state legislation, in the few instances in which composition was prescribed by law, supported this attitude.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, however, there made itself felt an influence which gradually changed the whole approach to composition teaching. In the little town of Yverdun, in Switzerland, a humble schoolmaster was attempting to apply to learning the laws that govern the development of the human intellect. In his school, abstract principles never preceded practice. And so it was that when Pestalozzi taught expression, he did not begin with rules and definitions. His idea was that principles of language are a result of inner growth to be developed through gradual practice on the part of the student.

Pestal

One effect of this philosophy on American education was to introduce written expression into schools earlier than anyone had ever believed possible. "Begin early" was the burden of every speech on composition teaching. Educators urged that the child be encouraged to write his thought as soon as he could put pencil to slate. Barnard, Mann,¹ and Rand preached the importance of early formation of habit. The efforts of Barnard in behalf of the early introduction of composition into the schools of Connecticut have already been noted (Chapter III). Rand, who had never forgotten the terror inspired in him when at the age of eighteen he was required, without any previous

1. In his Second Annual Report as Secretary of the Board of Education (1838), Mann wrote as follows: "At the earliest practicable period, let composition or translation be commenced. By composition I do not mean an essay 'On Friendship,' or 'On Honor;' nor that a young Miss of twelve years should write a homily 'On the duties of a Queen,' or a lad, impatient of his nonage, 'On the shortness of human life;' -- but that the learner should apply, on familiar subjects, the language he thinks best, to the ideas and emotions he perceives clearest and feels strongest, to see how well he can make them fit each other, -- first in sentences, or short paragraphs, then in more extended productions...

"It is only in this way, -- by reading or translating good authors, aided by oral instructions and by lexicographers, but, most of all, by early habit, -- that any one can acquire easy mastery over the copiousness and flexibility of the mother tongue..." See Com. Sch. Jour., (Nov. 15, 1839), 342.

preparation, to write a composition, urged that training in composition begin long before the formal composition class. The child should be accustomed at an early age to give utterance to his thoughts.¹

Mann's Third Annual Report as Secretary of the Board of Education showed that composition was rapidly finding a place in the elementary schools of Massachusetts.

And so, approximately in the decade 1830-1840, the old theory of principles before practice was gradually reversed. The necessity of beginning with written expression through which the principles of composition could be developed was recognized. The responsibility of the elementary school was presented by Mr. George B. Emerson, who spoke at a meeting of the New York State Convention of County School Superintendents at Syracuse in April, 1845. His speech was reported in the Common School Journal as follows:

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1. "You may eventually induce that energy and polish of manner, that shall make him an easy, fluent, forcible and elegant writer. His knowledge of grammar and rhetoric will not lie as useless lumber, in the storehouse of his memory; but will be at his command, as occasion." From a lecture on "Teaching Grammar and Composition" delivered before the American Institute of Instruction by Asa Rand. See Amer. Annals of Ed. and Instr., III (Apr. 1833), 174.
 2. "The ability to express ideas in writing, with vigor and perspicuity, is now deemed so valuable, that, in many places, composition has been added to the list of Common School studies." See Com. Sch. Jour., II (May 15, 1840), 151.

He would not teach grammar and then composition, -- he would reverse this order. If you confine the child to orthography and grammar, till he perfectly understands both, before you enter upon composition, you will wait until the child is out of your hands. He would learn the child to write, and then set him to writing compositions. He would thus teach orthography, grammar, and composition at one and the same time; and the instruction, being practical, would be valuable and permanent.¹

Similarly in the high school, the formal study of rhetoric early in the course was discouraged. Rand recommended copious writing without, at first, much attention to form. Through critical discussion with the pupil rhetorical rules could be discovered.²

Textbooks from the 30's on give evidence of the changed attitude. Books designed particularly for beginners appear on the market. One of the earliest of these is Easy Exercises in Composition by John Frost, Professor of Belles Lettres in the high school of Philadelphia. The first seventy-eight pages of his one hundred and twenty page book are devoted to exercises in writing without any attention to rules. To stimulate thought and imagination, he presents pictures of animals and of common scenes. Just as children speak before they learn grammar, so must they

1. Am. Annals of Ed. and Instr., VII (June 16, 1845), 215.

2. See Amer. Annals of Ed. and Instr., III (Apr. 1833), 173.

they be encouraged to express themselves in writing before they are burdened with rules is his contention.

The second half of the century witnessed the appearance of more books designed especially to meet the needs of younger pupils. Included in Barnard's list of American textbooks is F. Brookfield's in Composition (1855).¹ In April, 1856, the Reviewers' Table of the Massachusetts Teacher gave favorable notice to My First Exercises in Composition Writing,

a book specially prepared for the purpose of rendering the oft-dreaded exercise of composition not only easy but pleasant to the pupil... It may be usefully put into the ... [hands] of scholars, as soon as they have learned to write.²

In the same year appeared First Lessons in English Composition by Mrs. Spencer Smith of Mr. and Mrs. Smith's Female Seminary, St. Louis. The book is intended for the use of children as soon as they can write. Short lists of words are given to be copied on the slate and then to be inserted in their proper places in blanks left in sentences. The sentences are to be written on the slate with attention to capitals, spelling, and so forth. Not until the second half of the book are

1. Barnard's A. J. of Ed., XIII (March 1863), section following p. 208.

2. Mass. Teacher, IX (Apr. 1856), 187.

parts of speech introduced.

In 1864 W. W. Davis published Composition Writing, a book of suggestions to aid the teacher, rather than a text to be placed in the hands of pupils. He begins not with simple lessons in rhetoric, but with actual practice. Conversations on objects he recommends as a preliminary to writing, then the retelling of stories, followed by blackboard lessons in which a joint composition is prepared by the class. The approach to writing is not through a formidable array of definitions and paradigms but rather through actual writing.

Another book designed to smooth the path of the beginner in composition is T. S. Pinneo's Guide to Composition. It begins simply, with exercises in spelling, capitals, punctuation, words and phrases. An unusual feature in the arrangement is the distribution of rules throughout the book so that they can be mastered gradually in connection with the written exercises. Pinneo, however, presupposes some knowledge of grammar, or, if the book is placed into the hands of very young pupils, a course in grammar should be pursued at the same time.

John S. Hart intended his First Lessons in

Composition as a book of exercises rather than a treatise on theory. He says in his preface,

The exercises ... lead by natural and easy steps to the study of Grammar and Rhetoric, and are believed to be the best possible introduction to those important branches. The scholar who has been trained to write with grammatical and rhetorical correctness will find no difficulty in studying the theory of Grammar and Rhetoric; for here, as everywhere in the education process, practice before theory is the dictate equally of common sense and of sound philosophy.¹

The increasing number of textbooks for beginners is indicative of the re-organization that was going on in composition teaching in the schools. Language lessons, as distinguished from a study of formal grammar, were finding their way into the elementary schools. This new movement is embodied in Swinton's Language Lessons, which from the time of its publication in 1874 was widely used. It is, in reality, a grammar book, but the grammar is so presented that its practical value is not lost sight of. Swinton says in his preface,

This book is an attempt to bring the subject of language home to children at the age when knowledge is acquired in an objective way, by practice and habit, rather than by study of rules and definitions...

In pursuance of this plan, the traditional presentation of Grammar in a bristling array of classifications, nomenclatures, and paradigms, has been wholly discarded. The pupil is brought in contact with the

1. Op. cit., iv.

living language itself: he is made to deal with speech, to turn it over in a variety of ways, to handle sentences; so that he is not kept back from the exercise -- so profitable and interesting -- of using language till he has mastered the anatomy of the grammarian. Whatever of technical Grammar is here given is evolved from work previously done by the scholar.¹

In 1878 Swinton published a text on the same plan for use in high schools and academies.

From 1884 to the close of the century a widely used book was Lucy Chittenden's The Elements of English Composition, prepared for use in the lower grades of the high school. Her object, as stated in the preface, is to furnish as little theory as possible. She offers mainly a set of directions and exercises for pupils before they are mature enough for the formal study of rhetoric.

Two manuals of method of the latter half of the nineteenth century stress practice before a study of theory. Wickersham, in his Methods of Instruction (1867), believes that the approach to the art of composition is through imitation of the speaking and writing of others. Until the child is twelve years of age, the teacher's aim should be to develop linguistic power. Once that exists, pupils may be

1. Op. cit., iii.

acquainted with the niceties of grammar and rhetoric.¹ Hinsdale, about thirty years later, agrees that fluency must precede correctness of writing. "Formal grammar and rhetoric should play no part in the early stages of composition teaching."² Those rules that must be taught should be introduced through criticism of the composition rather than in formal lessons. A course in rhetoric may be introduced in the last year to sum up the principles already presented through composition.³

Hinsdale's suggestions are in accord with the recommendations of the Committee of Ten, which in 1892 summed up the best practices of the time and presented them as a standard for the schools of the nation. Composition was recommended to begin not later

1. Op. cit., 268.

2. Hinsdale, Teaching the Language-Arts, 113.

3. Ibid., 123-125, 183-84. Samuel Thurber in an article, "English in Secondary Schools: Some Considerations as to its Aims and its Needs", in The School Review, II (Oct. 1894), 477, presents a similar point of view: "Formal rhetoric I would abolish entirely from the course; or at most give it a lesson or two at the very end as a sort of resume of the foregoing discipline. Applied rhetoric, remember, will have been pursued during all the learner's school years. What the secondary school wants is the effects of rhetoric, not the science of it. Rhetorical science belongs in a more advanced stage of education."

than the third year of school, and the study of grammar was deferred until the child reached the age of thirteen. Rhetorical principles, it was suggested, be given incidentally in connection with composition during the first two years of high school. In the third year, one hour a week might be given to a systematic view of rhetorical principles, "a kind of codification of principles already applied in practice."¹

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Pestalozzi's idea of the value of practice, introduced in the first quarter of the century, finally triumphed. "Unremitting practice" became the watchword. Dr. Charles Eliot in an article in the Forum recommended "constant practice under judicious criticism."² The Harvard Committee on Composition and Rhetoric in its various reports emphasized that it was only by daily drill that the level of composition writing could be raised. True it is that many of those who favored practice did so with the narrow goal of accuracy in mind. But even with that limitation, the new devotion to practice was likely to do more for composition teaching than the former memorization of rules.

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1. N.E.A., Rept. of the Com. on Sec. Sch. Studies (1893), 91.
 2. Eliot, Charles, "Wherein Popular Ed. has Failed," Forum, 14 (Dec., 1892), 419.

Translation

If Ezekiel Cheever had been asked whether he taught English composition, he would very likely have replied in the affirmative, though he never used an English grammar or rhetoric in his school and never required an English essay. But his students did study Latin and Greek grammar; they translated from those languages into English; and they composed sentences in the classical languages. The linguistic training thus given was expected to carry over into English. The current idea of the value of training in the classical languages is amply illustrated in the following anecdote told by Hazlitt. When a father expressed a wish to the headmaster of an academy that his son learn English rather than Latin grammar, the teacher said, "Sir, Grammar is Grammar all the world over."¹

Even after schools had begun to recognize the need for some instruction in English composition, practically the sole method employed in many was translation. Late into the nineteenth century the chief authority cited for this practice was the eminent head-

1. Hazlitt, W.C., Schools, School Books, and Schoolmasters, 219.

master of Rugby, Thomas Arnold, who declared that

Every lesson in Greek or Latin may, or ought to be made a lesson in English; the translation of every sentence in Demosthenes or Tacitus is properly an exercise in extemporaneous English composition; a problem how to express with equal brevity, clearness, and force, in our own language, the thought which the original author has so admirably expressed in his.¹

But what the schools usually forgot in their instruction was that Arnold had in mind not a literal, word for word rendering of the original, but rather the expression of the meaning of an entire sentence in idiomatic English. He deplored the mere construing of a passage, inveighing against a system which instead of fostering a correct use of English is injurious to it by introducing a foreign word order and unidiomatic expressions. The language which results, he declared, "is neither Greek nor English, stiff, obscure, and flat, exemplifying all the faults incident to language and excluding every excellence."²

The practice in expression afforded by translation was not the sole argument in its favor. There were many who contended that the average schoolboy has nothing worth writing about and that to expect him to compose when he has no ideas is like asking him to make

1. Arnold, Thomas, Miscellaneous Works, 348.

2. Ibid.

bricks without straw. Translation, by providing him with the materials of thought, enables him to devote his entire attention to the form of expression. In that respect it is even superior to original composition and should therefore "form a chief feature even in a course of English composition."¹ As late as 1892, a professor at Yale used the same argument in defending Yale's entrance requirement in English, which was limited to "simple and idiomatic English" in sight translations from prose Latin, and from Xenophon.²

Advocates of the translation method also cited the importance of association with good models. If the young painter is sent to study the works of Raphael, why should not the young writer study the models of style and eloquence to be found in the Greek and Roman classics. They furnish that excitement needed to develop the talents of the student.³

Down through the nineteenth century, even after other methods had been introduced, translation was expected to contribute to training in English ex-

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1. Hinkel, Chas. J., "Influence of the Study of Latin upon the Study of English in Schools", a paper read at the University Convocation, July, 1873. See Univ. of the S. of N.Y., 87th Rept. of the Bd. of Reg. (1874), 591-2.
 2. Beers, Henry A., "Ent. Req. in Eng. at Yale", Ed. Rev., III (May, 1892), 427-443.
 3. From a letter addressed by the Rev. Professor Stuart of Andover to the editor of the Quarterly Jour. of the Amer. (Theological) Ed. Soc. See Amer. Jour. of Ed. (Russell), III (Nov. 1828), 665-6.

pression. The writers of books on methods sanctioned the practice. William B. Fowle, author of The Teacher's Institute (1849), said that when pupils began the study of a foreign language, he required them to write out their translations, which he corrected carefully.¹ The state superintendent of public instruction of Pennsylvania, James P. Wickersham, in his textbook on method, recommended translation as "discipline in all that relates to the use of language."² At the close of the century, A. A. Hinsdale, professor of education at the University of Michigan, declared the exercise beneficial to students who "carefully study a foreign language." He found it of value not only for the practice afforded, but also because of the element of unconscious imitation.³ Cognizant of the danger inherent in the method, he issued a word of warning to teachers to insist upon the transference of the thought from the foreign language into English. The exercise should not degenerate into a "mere matching of words ... lest the Latin or German lesson undoes the English lesson."⁴

1. Op. cit., 178-184.

2. Wickersham, Methods of Instr., 272.

3. Hinsdale, Teaching the Language Arts, 60.

4. See Appendix A for samples of "translation English".

How seldom the teaching was of the superior type demanded early in the century by Arnold and later by Hinsdale is evident in the complaints of the colleges about "translation English." Harvard brought the matter to a head by the publication of the Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric (1892), which included specimens of English translation from entrance examination papers in Latin and Greek.¹ The second report of that committee (1895) was devoted entirely to the subject of translation. It was pointed out that although many preparatory schools stated in the prospectus that a "free, original, and idiomatic rendering"² was insisted upon in translation, the examination papers did not give proof of such instruction. Believing the main reason for the discrepancy to be the mistaken idea that students could learn to write English by oral translation of Greek and Latin, the committee recommended frequent practice in written translation.³

If the effects of the classical languages upon composition had been limited to the English used in translation, it might legitimately have been argued,

1. Ibid., 65.

2. Harvard College, Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. (1895), 275.

3. Ibid., [1892], 152-156.

as it often was, that a lack of comprehension of the Latin or Greek was responsible for the garbled English. But even in writing English compositions, students fell into the Latin word order and idiom. Professor A. S. Hill of Harvard culled the following from English compositions:

Orlando would marry Rosalind, she being willing. Darcy being informed concerning this trouble interested himself in removing the difficulty. The King of Lilliput applied to Gulliver, who told him to be of good cheer, not making known his design.¹

Harvard's exposé of "translation English" had its effect upon the teaching of composition in the preparatory schools. A later investigation of the Harvard Committee on Composition and Rhetoric (1897) revealed that some secondary schools were insisting upon good English in all studies, not just in the composition course. Teachers of Greek and Latin were refusing to accept literal translations and demanding idiomatic renderings.²

1. Hill, A. S., Foundations of Rhetoric, 205.

2. The nature of the incidental work pursued in a small number of schools can be gathered from the following excerpts from student compositions included in the Report of the [Harvard] Com. on Comp. and Rhet. (1897):

P. 478, #92. An academy in Massachusetts. "The masters were always particular about any written work which was handed in, regardless of the subject. (Note continued on page 256)

2. (Note continued from page 255)

Good English was required, and if work was handed in badly written, it was marked accordingly. English translations were also required in class."

P. 474, #84. Chicago. "Once a week we were required by our instructor in Latin or Greek to make a written translation of some given passage from Homer or Virgil. These, after they were examined by him, were taken to the English instructor, who went over them with us personally, and marked them as part of our English work."

P. 468, #75. An academy in New Hampshire. "I was also greatly helped by Profs ----- and ----- of the Latin and the Greek departments, respectively, both of whom took great pains to give their classes frequent exercises in writing translation with especial attention to the English used."

P. 466, #71. A California boys' high school. "Outside of English, written work was required in Government, ... History... and in the classics, of which I took only Latin. In translating this, good English was always insisted upon. In Government and in History, papers of considerable length were frequently called for. They were, however never revised as pieces of English Composition."

The following reports are representative of the practice in the majority of schools:

P. 509, #149. "In the translation of Latin in this school we were required to be excessively literal and were not allowed to translate freely or into the English idiom."

P. 440, #32. A Massachusetts city high school. "That year, past without any specific practice in the art of writing, was certainly a detriment which was increased by daily encounters with un-English constructions in the Greek and Latin, litteral [sic] translations of which were so often allowed, that I have not yet been able to lose them entirely."

P. 439, #30. A New England academy. "Classics were carried on for the classics, not for English. In Virgil, true, we sometimes were asked to write out a translation into good English, and were marked accordingly, but on the whole, we were allowed the Latin or Greek, as the case might be. French and German were carried on the same way, now and then, our instructor took a stand on good English translation, but soon relented, and fell back again to the old way."

Much more written work was required, not only in Latin and Greek but also in such studies as history and science. The effect of this incidental training, the Committee reported, was discernible in the papers written by students coming from schools which emphasized written work.¹

Composition as an Independent Subject

The typical method of teaching composition in the academies is well set forth by a teacher who recalled his own childhood experience with that subject as follows:

The teacher did not teach it at all; he only gave out the subjects, and the pupils were required, volens volens, to bring in their compositions. The misspelled words and the greatest blunders of grammar were marked by the teacher, and then they were given back to be copied. After this was done, the friends of the school came in great numbers once in two weeks, to hear them read. The pupils were assembled in state for these occasions, and read their compositions in a high-sounding school tone, for the gratification of their friends, teachers, and their fellow pupils.²

1. Ibid., 416.

2. The Conn. Common Sch. Jour., XVI (May, 1861), 151-156. An article signed 'Daniel'. The method described was employed about 1840. A similar method was in use at the Cayuga Academy (New York State): "The larger students are required to produce at least 20 lines on each alternate Wednesday afternoon, at which time the composition (Note continued on page 258)"

If the composition work in the academy had been preceded by training in written expression in the elementary school, the task confronting the pupil would not have been so formidable. But suddenly, at the age of fifteen or sixteen he found himself required to write an essay with no preparation beyond a formal knowledge of the rules of grammar and rhetoric. The application of the technical principles with which he had been storing his mind he was now to make without any assistance from the teacher.¹

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2. (Note continued from page 257)
 is read before the students of both departments assembled in the same room, after which it is placed in the hands of the instructor and corrections are made in orthography and style, which are pointed out, if time permit, before the whole school, which serves not only as a stimulus to the production of a more correct performance on the next occasion, but imparts useful information to the other scholars." Univ. of the S. of N. Y., 54th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1841), 110.

The Utica Academy (1838) gave a little more assistance: "A subject is given, for instance, the advantages attendant on a liberal education: this is divided into several heads, as many as may be deemed necessary; the scholars note them down, and bring them in two or three days afterwards. The teacher or principal reads the compositions; the pupils being all seated with their slates taking down all the grammatical errors, or incorrect spelling. In addition to this, the classical students one day in each week, translate a chapter of Cicero or Greek reader into English." Univ. of the S. of N. Y., 51st Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1838), 96.

1. See Appendix E for specimens of compositions written without much guidance.

Furthermore, pupils were expected to write embryo literary masterpieces on abstract, philosophical subjects ranging from Adversity to Zeal. It was not unusual for a lad of sixteen to wrestle with The Moral Sublime or Man and Government, as found in the Savage, the Pastoral, the Agricultural, and the Commercial, State.¹

Harriet Beecher Stowe at the age of nine wrote on The Difference between the Natural and the Moral Sublime, and two years later presented at the annual exhibit of the school a paper upholding the negative side of the question Can the Immortality of the Soul be Proved by the Light of Nature? In partial defense of her instructor it must be said that a thorough discussion of these subjects preceded the writing.² Such preparation was, however, the exception rather than the rule.

No simple expression of opinion on the subject would suffice. The pupil was rather to develop his theme according to a very formal plan borrowed from the Latin. Two types of themes were recognized, the simple, calling for a didactic treatment of such subjects as Virtue, Patriotism, Honor; and complex themes containing propositions to be proved; for example, Virtue

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1. Quackenbos, Adv. Course of Comp. and Rhet. (1879), 432-3.
 2. Stowe, E. S. and L. B., Harriet Beecher Stowe, 27-28.

is resoeeted, Patriotism is admired.¹ There were five heads under which a simple theme might be discussed: (1) definition, (2) cause, (3) relation to time, (4) to place, (5) effects, or nature, importance, and effects.² The plan for the complex theme was even more elaborate, calling for the development of these topics: proposition, reason, confirmation, simile, example, testimony, or quotation, conclusion (summary, practical use, or appropriate closing reflections).³

The style encouraged was one characterized by long periods and florid, grandiloquent expression. Simplicity was shunned, and practice was given in the transposition of simple statements into ornate euphuisms. The exercise known as periphrasis called for such transpositions as the following: "The sun shines" = "The source of light spreads abroad his rays."⁴ Elaborate figures of speech also found favor.

The method of teaching composition made that subject extremely unpopular. Pupils dreaded the weekly essay day and resorted to all sorts of dishonest practices to evade the imposed task. The varied types of

1. Russell, A Gram. of Comp., 135.

2. Ibid., 136. See Appendix F for an example of a simple theme.

3. Ibid., 139.

4. Parker, R., Prog. Ex. in Eng. Comp., 21.

preparation for the disagreeable assignment are graphically described in an article in the Rhode Island Schoolmaster:

Composition-writing is the occasion of more lying and deception than all the other school exercises united. The "subject" is announced, say "Ambition", or something equally stupid. The day is fixed for receiving the essays. Every one puts off the hateful task to the last day or two, and then there is an agony and struggle. In a class of one hundred boys, the result of this agony and struggle will generally be about as follows: -- ten will honestly write their compositions to the best of their small ability; ten will write the lines very far apart, and use the longest words they can think of to 'fill', writing August 24, 1852, thus: "On the second day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two;" another ten will write a few lines of their own, make liberal quotations, and get help from other boys; ten more will present compositions which they or their brothers wrote at another school; another ten will get a sister or a friend to help them out; and the rest will "fish" outright, that is, copy or translate a passage from a book, and swear it is their own, through thick and thin. I remember hearing six compositions read at a public exhibition of a school I attended in boyhood, every word of which I myself had written or dictated to distressed schoolfellows; and what was more ridiculous, four of them had a more honorable place in the programme than the labored essay which I had written for myself. It was only the other day I overheard a boy, who was showing the neat arrangement of his desk to another, say, holding up a little Spanish geography, "This is where I get my compositions." -- "Won't you lend it to me, next Friday?" said the other. "Can't lend it," was the far-seeing reply; "you might translate a piece that I have already given in, and old Simon (his venerable preceptor) might remember it." Nor are teachers innocent in this wholesale deception. When an "Exhibition" is in preparation, the compositions undergo a truly remarkable process called "correction". Need I say more?¹

1. Op. cit., I (Sept. 1855) 204-206. See Appendix G for another description of a schoolboy's preparation for composition day.

So obnoxious was the task that parents often insisted that their children be excused from composition writing.¹

Occasionally there was a schoolmaster who employed a more enlightened method of teaching composition. The Litchfield School in Connecticut was fortunate enough to have such an instructor, John Brace, from 1814 to 1832. He was the nephew of Miss Sarah Pierce, founder of the Litchfield School. Very much interested in writing himself, he knew how to stimulate the minds of his pupils. His success certainly cannot be attributed to the topics he set, for they were the abstract, philosophical subjects that were popular at that time. One week he gave the topic, What is the disposition? Is it innate or acquired?² That he could get a group of young girls to write on such subjects was due entirely to his method of preliminary discussions. On Saturdays, the instructor

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1. "A gentleman eminent in literature told us not long ago that it had always been his custom to stipulate with the teachers of schools to which he sent his daughters, that the latter should not be obliged to write "compositions"; for he said that, as usually conducted, it seemed to him to be an exercise in the art of diluting the smallest amount of meaning with the largest quantity of words; and he thought no practice was more prejudicial than that to the attainment of good habits of mind, or real power of expression." See W. P. Atkinson, "Composition", The Mass. Teacher, XIX (June, 1866), 190-5.
 2. Vanderpoel, More Chronicles of a Pioneer School from 1892 to 1833, 200.

read the compositions to the class. Evidently John Brace was kindly in his criticisms, for composition day in the Litchfield School was not anticipated with as much apprehension as in many other schools of the period.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was for a time a pupil at the Litchfield School, considered John Brace one of the most stimulating and inspiring instructors she had ever known. She wrote of him as follows:

Mr. Brace exceeded all the instructors that I ever knew in the faculty of teaching the art of English composition. The constant excitement in which he kept the minds of his pupils -- the wide and varied regions of thought into which he led them -- formed a preparation for teaching composition, the main requisite for which, whatever people may think, is to have something that one feels interested to say.¹

Another pupil of John Brace, Rose Terry Cooke, in a letter to his daughter, also praised his ability as a teacher:

I owe to your father the greater share of whatever power to write I possess, and I have often wished I could see the notes he used in his composition class lectures. I think they would make such a useful book.²

The instruction in composition at the Litchfield Academy is not typical of the early part of the nineteenth century. John Brace, like Franklin, was ahead of his time. He had discovered that principle which

1. Stowe, E. S. and L. B., op. cit., 26.

2. Vanderpoel, Chronicles of a Pioneer School, 310.

his fellow schoolmasters did not learn until the close of the century -- that if pupils are to write they must be interested in the subject and their minds must be stimulated. He provided that interest and stimulation.¹

Another progressive schoolmaster was William Russell. He realized the necessity for inducting pupils gradually into the mysteries of composition. In his textbook, A Grammar of Composition (1823), he outlines the course of study which he followed at the New-Township Academy in New Haven. Like most of the teachers of his time, Russell believed that a thorough knowledge of grammar and rhetoric should precede composition; but, unlike them, he realized that pupils need assistance in applying the rules. Consequently, he began with very simple exercises in reproduction of the ideas in short passages. The teacher criticised the written work and required the pupil to recite the rules violated. Gradually longer passages for reproduction were introduced. After a while, compositions were based not so much on the extracts read as on the discussion which followed, in which the subject, scope, topics, and method were determined. As the class became more proficient, the assistance of the teacher was lessened, until finally

1. See Appendix H for specimens of compositions written at the Litchfield School.

the pupil reached the stage where he chose his own subject and method of development. According to this plan of study

Composition is ... made to depend not on the fortunate suggestion of a happy mood of mind, but on regularity and system. Success is not left to be the result of superior ability, but becomes something attainable by all who studiously make it their aim.¹

Russell's method, however, seems not to have had a great number of adherents, for his book did not become very popular. We have been able to find no evidence that it went beyond the first edition.

While a few of the more enlightened schoolmasters in the academies were developing for themselves methods of teaching composition effectively, another movement, more widespread in its influence, was under way. Attention has already been called to the popularity of Pestalozzian ideas, which resulted in the introduction of language work into the elementary grades, thus lightening considerably the task of teachers in academies and high schools. There were, too, other benefits which the secondary schools derived: they learned from the lower schools valuable lessons in regard to methods and subject matter.

1. Russell, Gram. of Comp., 144.

One of the basic principles in Pestalozzi's philosophy is learning through observation. A corollary of that principle is that all the child learns through experience and observation must be connected with language. Hence, much of the instruction in Pestalozzi's school took the form of discussion about objects, things familiar to the child in the life about him, closely related to his feelings and interests. Written expression was just one step farther, the child writing down the ideas developed in the conversations about objects. Discussions such as the following became in the lower schools the usual preliminary:

The classes next prepared to write composition. At this exercise the teacher proposes some common object to be described, and by questions, collects all the facts relating to the subject. The subject proposed for this afternoon was Fishes. The teacher asked,

In what element do Fishes live?

In the water.

Do any ever live out of the water?

They do.

What are such called?

Amphibious. (A laugh.)

Is this right? -- There is a kind called the 'Flying Fish,' which naturally remain a short time out of water.

Have fishes any blood?

They have.

What is the color of their blood?

Red.

No, it is white.

A multitude of such questions were asked and answered, until a sufficient number of facts were collected

to furnish employ in writing for an hour. These description are to be written at home and brought the next day, when each reads her own piece.¹

Taking their cue from elementary school practice, educators began urging the value of discussion as a preparation for writing in the high school. The mere setting of a subject was considered insufficient, and teachers were urged to see that pupils left the classroom with ideas on the assigned topic. That some of the more conscientious teachers put the new method into practice is evident from contemporary accounts. A writer in the Connecticut Common School Journal (1861), signing himself Daniel, tells of his experience with composition about 1840 after he had transferred from a school in which it was poorly taught. His new instructor told the pupils that they would be expected to write such compositions as boys, not men, would write, and that they should never write until they had thought and feelings of their own on the subject. After several months spent on reproducing stories, pupils discussed some object, such as a plow or steamboat, the teacher asking questions. After the subject had been thoroughly covered, the pupils wrote, being urged to produce compositions

1. Amer. Annals of Ed. and Inst. I (July, 1831), 325-6. See Appendix I for further illustration of this method and a specimen composition based on the discussion.

as different as possible from the notes they had taken. Not all teachers were as conscientious as this one, however, and for the most part pupils continued to struggle unaided. "Daniel's" experience with a poor teacher of composition about 1840, which has already been cited (see p. 257) is typical of the practice in the majority of schools. Conversations about objects could not be allowed to detract from the time devoted to the languages and to mathematics.

The advance in method was accompanied by an improvement in the type of composition topic prescribed. Subjects were taken more frequently from experiences of boys and girls in and out of school; other studies were drawn upon for material.¹ The germ of the "functional centers" curriculum is seen in the practice of the Troy Female Seminary:

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1. One teacher voices his protest against the conventional topics as follows: "We have walked in the churchyard, till we know every epitaph by heart; we have read disquisitions upon patience and virtue; we have perused remarks upon temperance, till it seems that nothing more can possibly be said; and now we ask that our pupils leave these topics, of which they know nothing, and write upon subjects with which they are or may be familiar. Let them write what they think, and they will soon find (what is now new to most of them) that they can think with ease. We may not make novelists and poets of all our pupils; it is not desirable we should; the world needs them for nobler purposes; we shall teach them to corres-
- (Note continued on page 269)

for facilitating improvement in composition, we would suggest ... directing requests from the pupils to the teachers, to be put in writing, and this in conformity to a general principle, that young composers should be kept, in their subjects of composition, to things within their knowledge; matters of fact, rather than idle dream of imagination."

Along with familiarity of subject, the importance of interest was stressed. "Interest is the mainspring in Composition"² is the dictum of one writer who urges daily discussions as a means of arousing it. Discussions of Psychology, and of Poetry, Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture, as Means of refining Taste were being displaced by topics such as the following, Ought the young ladies of this school to have an exercise in Declamation before the School? The teacher reported, in the school in which this topic was discussed, "better compositions than ever before", because of the strong competitive spirit.³ W. H. Wells, Superintendent of Schools of

1. (Note continued from page 268)
pond with propriety, and attend more acceptably through all future life to the demands both of business and friendship." See The Mass. Teacher, IV (May 1851), 146-149.

1. Univ. of the S. of N.Y., 51st Rept. of the Bd. of Regts. (1837), 89.
2. Amer. Annals of Ed. and Inst., I (July, 1831), 313-320.
3. The Mass. Teacher, XVII (Jan. 1864), 72.

Chicago, in his annual report (1861), actually urged that composition be made a pleasant task, suggesting a school paper as a means of arousing interest.¹

Excellent suggestions to teachers for composition topics are found in a contemporary treatise on education, The Teacher (1836), by Jacob Abbott, at one time principal of the Mt. Vernon Female School in Boston. He is probably better known as the author of that once popular juvenile series, the Rolio books. "Assign practical subjects" is his advice. If the community is discussing the location of a new school house, let pupils gather the arguments from their parents and then present them in simple language. A building struck by lightning and burned furnishes material for an exercise in description. So does the erection of a public building, the progress of which can be reported and even future scenes therein anticipated. By such familiar and practical assignments "empty, florid, verbose declamation", which is encouraged by the setting of moral essays, can be prevented.² Abbott inveighs constantly against "common thoughts expressed in pompous periods",³

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1. Conn. Comm. Sch. Jour., XVI (June, 1861), 180-181.
 2. Op. cit., 86-87.
 3. Ibid., 251.

holding that by giving assignments within the experience of children, simplicity can be attained. He illustrates his point by giving two compositions written by twelve-year-old children, one on a topic beyond the experience of a child, the other on a familiar subject:

The Pains of a Sailor's Life

The joyful sailor embarks on board of his ship, the sails are spread to catch the playful gale, swift as an arrow he cuts the rolling wave. A few days thus sporting on the briny wave, when suddenly the sky is overspread with clouds, the rain descends in torrents, the sails are lowered, the gale begins, the vessel is carried with great velocity, and the shrouds unable to support the tottering mast, gives way to the furious tempest; the vessel is drove among the rocks, is sprung aleak, the sailor works at the pumps, till, faint and weary, is heard from below, six feet of water in the hold, the boats are got ready, but before they are into them, the vessel dashed against a reef of rocks, some in despair throw themselves into the sea, others get on the rocks without any clothes or provisions, and linger a few days, perhaps weeks or months, living on shell fish or perhaps taken up by some ship. Others get on pieces of the wreck, and perhaps be cast on some foreign country, where perhaps he may be taken by the natives, and sold into slavery where he never more returns.¹

This composition, he explains, was the writer's first attempt and is given without any alterations. In writing the following composition, the pupil was directed to reproduce as nearly as possible the conversation of two children lost in the woods:

1. Ibid., 251-252.

Two Children Lost in the Woods

Emily. Look here! see how many berries I've got. I don't believe you've got so many.

Charles. Yes, I'm sure I have. My basket's most full; and if we hurry, we shall get ever so many before we go home. So pick away as fast as you can, Emily.

Emily. There mine is full. Now we'll go and find some flowers for mother. You know somebody told us there were some red ones, close to that rock.

Charles. Well, so we will. We'll leave our baskets here, and come back and get them.

Emily. But if we can't find our way back, what shall we do?

Charles. Poh! I can find the way back. I only want a quarter to seven years old, and I shan't lose myself, I know.

Emily. Well! we've got flowers enough, and now I'm tired and want to go home.

Charles. I don't, but if you are tired we'll go and find our baskets.

Emily. Where do you think they are? We've been looking a great while for them. I know we are lost, for when we went after the flowers we only turned once, and coming back, we have turned three times.

Charles. Have we? Well never mind, I guess we shall find them.

Emily. I'm afraid we shan't. Do let's run.

Charles. Well so do. Oh, Emily! here's a brook, and I am sure we didn't pass any brook, going.

Emily. Oh, dear! we must be lost. Hark! Charles! didn't you hear that dreadful noise just now! Wasn't it a bear?

Charles. Poh! I should love to see a bear here. I guess if he should come near me, I would give him one good slap that would make him feel pretty bad. I could kill him at the first hit.

Emily. I should like to see you taking hold of a bear. Why didn't you know bears were stronger than men? But only see how dark it grows; we shan't see Ma' to-night, I'm afraid.

Charles. So am I: do let's run some more.

Emily. O Charles, do you believe we shall ever find the way out of this dreadful long wood?

Charles. Let's scream, and see if somebody wont come!

Emily. Well, (screaming) Ma'! Ma'!

Charles (screaming also) Pa'! Pa'!

Emily. Oh, dear! there's the sun setting. It will be dreadfully dark by and by, won't it.¹

1. *Ibid.*, 252-3.

The new tendencies in method and subject noted above do not indicate a sudden reform in composition teaching in the 30's. Composition was not yet recognized as of sufficient importance in the curriculum to warrant much attention from anyone. However, the seeds of reformation had been sown, although the full harvest was not to be reaped for many years. The preliminary discussion and the choice of interesting and familiar subjects have become the prevision and functional centers of today.

As a result of the emphasis on accuracy late in the nineteenth century, correction of sentences grammatically and rhetorically incorrect became for a while an important part of the work in composition. Correction of false syntax, a method borrowed from the teaching of Latin, had at one time been a leading device in the teaching of grammar. It began to lose ground, however, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century when new ways of teaching grammar began to displace the traditional methods. About 1885 exercises in the correction of "bad English" were revived, but in connection with composition instead of grammar. One hour a week seems to have been the usual time assigned to this sort of drill.

Critics of the method held that it familiarized the pupil with more bad English instead of helping him to eradicate his own errors.¹ Its supporters contended that examples of bad English by contrast developed a sense for good English. The colleges especially rallied to the support of exercises in false syntax as an excellent test of the student's knowledge of grammar. After 1894, when the Joint Conference, acting on a suggestion of the Committee of Ten (1892), recommended the omission of the "bad English" question from college entrance examinations, correction of faulty sentences received less attention in the composition course.

The demand for accuracy was responsible for still another innovation in method, one that was, however, more widely discussed² than practised. On every hand

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1. A reviewer, praising a new textbook for omission of exercises for correction, says: "This somewhat crude system had bad effects both on the impressionable student whose mind must struggle with the incorrect images that the method obtrudes into his consciousness, and on the ordinary learner who soon comes to correct sentences by clock-work, assuming that with each something must be the matter." The Sch. Rev. 4 (Apr. 1896), 242.
 2. President Eliot of Harvard, speaking at a meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, said, "I have an impression that the only way to learn to write is by writing. We all of us learn to talk, and some of us learn to write; and those of us who learn to write, I think, agree that we learn by writing and in no (Note continued on page 275)

there were recommendations that pupils be given opportunity for constant practice in writing, and some of the schools, patterning themselves after Harvard, introduced the daily theme. In the Hotchkiss School, in Lakeville, Connecticut, the pupils spent the first ten minutes of every English recitation in writing a short theme in their composition books. These were on subjects assigned by the teacher and usually taken from the supplementary reading. They were never more than a page long, often not more than a half page. The teacher corrected the exercises and returned them for revision.¹ Such intensive composition work was very time consuming for the teacher, and it was, of course, possible only in those schools that had a special teacher of English. In the Hotchkiss School, for example, the English teacher

² (Note continued from page 274)

other way." See The Sch. Rev., I (Dec., 1893) 667.

James H. Penniman of the DeLancey School, Philadelphia, urged that "Pupils should have practice in the art of writing." He cited in support of his belief the example of Hawthorne, who at the age of twelve received from his uncle a note-book with this advice on the first leaf, "Write out your thoughts, some every day, in as good words as you can, upon any and all subjects, as it is one of the best means of your securing for maturer years command of thought and language." See The Sch. Rev., I (Oct., 1893) 464.

The principal of the Classical High School, Worcester, Mass., J.G. Wight, headed his list of suggestions for composition teaching as follows: "Insist upon daily work in composition. This is the all-important feature." See The Sch. Rev., I (Jan., 1893), 22.

1. See Addresses and Proceedings of the 8th Ann. Meeting of the New Eng. Assoc. of Col. and Prep. Sch., (1893), 77.

was given a reduced number of recitations in order that he might have time for the work of correction. The West Chester High School (Pennsylvania) reported "For three months in every school year the pupils in each class have daily exercises in composition writing, working with sentence, paragraph and theme successively."¹ In some schools the "daily theme" came to mean a brief class exercise three times a week.² Although the daily written exercise did not become a universal practice, the continued agitation in favor of it was salutary in reminding schools that one composition a month was scarcely sufficient.

There was another group which, although it favored constant practice, held that such practice should be given whenever the opportunity presented itself, whether the class was one in Latin, history, or

1. Report of the Supt. of Pub. Inst. of the Commonwealth of Pa. (1898), 261-262.

2. "In addition to reading... books, the class was required to write three ten minute compositions a week on subjects given out at the time. These subjects were many of them outlandish, for example, 'He was a mean old miser,' 'Times when it is hard to talk,' 'Thanksgiving at the poorhouse' etc." See Harvard Col., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. (1897), 442, #36.

"But by far the most valuable, in my opinion, of all the training in English, was that, in what was called 'daily themes' although in reality they came only three times a week, in the regular English hours. The first fifteen or twenty minutes (if I remember rightly) (Note continued on page 277)

English. These proponents of the incidental method believed that English composition should not be taught as a thing apart, but as a component part of every subject. As Professor J. M. Hart of Cornell expressed it at the Binghamton Conference,

All school work should be English work, whether the study be Latin or geography. Wherever the subject matter is well learned the lessons afford the best foundation for practice in written expression.¹

The Harvard Reports of the early years of the 90's particularly called attention to the need for incidental instruction in written expression. Students had come to regard good English as a skill to be paraded only in the English room. The Committee recommended that pupils be held responsible for correct expression in all classes, and called attention especially to the opportunity for English training in the Latin class.² The English Conference of the Committee of Ten likewise suggested that training in English go hand in hand with the study of every other subject, -- "every teacher, whatever his

2. (Note continued from page 276)
of each recitation were devoted to the writing on any subject which we might wish of a short theme, the length of which was never to exceed one page. These were corrected, handed back, and revised or rewritten by the student." Ibid., 450, #51.

1. The Sch. Rev. I (May, 1893), 297.

2. Harv. Col., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet., [1892], 157.

department, should feel responsible for the use of good English on the part of his pupils."¹ The Harvard Report of 1897 indicates that other departments beside the English were beginning to assume responsibility for correct expression.² However, the number of schools employing the incidental system at the close of the century was not large, for, according to the same report, "the great bulk of the schools, raise the objection of time." The Committee pointed out that those schools that were adopting the incidental system were "almost invariably those generally recognized as the more intelligent and progressive, and those, also, the students from which presented the most creditable and observant papers."³

As long as composition remained an incidental subject studied "throughout the year", there was no need for a special teacher in that field. Almost anyone could assign and correct the few themes. As recognition of the subject grew, so did the demand increase for teachers of written expression. The teaching of literature was also within their sphere, but at this stage it

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1. N.E.A., Rept. of the Com. on Sec. Sch. Studies (1893), 93.
 2. See footnote 2, p. 255.
 3. Op. cit., 416.

was considered mainly a means of providing practice in composition. There was no unanimity of opinion, however, in the matter of employing special teachers, and the last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a lively battle between the "correlationists" and the "specialists". The former group found an able champion in Samuel Thurber of the Girls' High School of Boston who contended that the special teacher of English, as far as correct speaking and writing of English are concerned, has no place in the school. Since every teacher, regardless of his subject, can distinguish between good and bad English, every teacher should be responsible for correcting the errors of pupils in his charge. The appointment of a special teacher of composition, whose whole attention is devoted to rules, sets up a standard above the speech of the mass of educated men. The school has no room for a priggish, precise use of English.¹ Also, from the point of view of the teacher himself, the specialist should be abolished:

The reading of a certain limited amount of juvenile writing for purposes of correction is a pleasing task, leading to personal relations, to an appreciation of individual difficulties, to a possible giving of wise counsel.

1. Thurber, Samuel, "English in Sec. Schs.", The Sch. Rev., II, (Oct, 1894), 468-478.

But the reading of juvenile writing in great quantities is inconsistent with mental and physical health. All the teachers of a school should share equally this task of supervising the English writing ... I do not see how any teacher can submit to have the drudgery of having several times his share of this work thrust upon him.¹

The "specialists" did not object to the incidental teaching of English expression, but believed that one person should be held responsible for the English of the school. It would be part of his task to enlist the co-operation of the other members of the teaching force.² The question "Shall there be a teacher

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1. Thurber, Samuel, "Five Axioms of Composition Teaching", The Sch. Rev., V (Jan., 1897), 15-16.
 2. Professor F. N. Scott of the University of Michigan, who was opposed to Thurber's view, at a meeting of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, urged the need of such a teacher: "The solution of the English problem is to be found in emphasizing, not in minimizing, the importance of the special teacher of English. His status should be defined, the importance of his work should be recognized, he should be held to a high standard of scholarship. In selecting candidates for this position, such questions should be asked as, Is the applicant first and foremost a specialist in English composition? Is it his desire to teach composition? Does he wish to make it his life work? Has he the special aptitude and the special preparation which will fit him for his difficult and arduous duties? That such a teacher should be able to write respectable English and be well-read in literature, may be taken for granted; but these qualifications should not be regarded as sufficient. The candidate should have the ability to correct manuscripts rapidly, accurately, and pleasurably. In order that he may be delivered from the tyranny of the textbook, he should be a master of the history and theory of
(Note continued on page 281)

of composition?" was finally answered in the affirmative, at least to the extent that the English teacher be responsible for instruction in written along with oral expression, grammar and literature.

A general idea of the methods employed in some of the high schools of the country in the late 80's can be gained from studies made by two state teachers' associations. A wide variety of practices was reported in regard to the number of compositions required. The Massachusetts committee found that in one western school the pupils were expected to prepare a nine-page essay four times a year. A Massachusetts school, on the other hand, required forty compositions a year, about

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2. (Note continued from page 280)
 rhetoric. He should be rich in devices and expedients for maintaining interest in the work. If he can engage in original research in the field of rhetoric or composition and so make his work in the class room or upon the essays contribute directly to breadth of scholarship, then so much the better for both teacher and students. An instructor thus equipped will lay stress upon supervision, correction, and personal consultation, rather than upon recitation work. He will have a rhetorical laboratory and consultation-room rather than a recitation-room. He will not be content until he has made himself responsible for the English of the school in which he is employed, and has enlisted to his aid the services of his associates." "Rept. of the 22nd Meeting of the Mich. Schoolmasters' Club, at Ann Arbor, Mar. 30-31, The Sch. Rev., II (June, 1894) 373-4.

one and one-half pages in length. Approximately half of the schools reported that a monthly essay was required.¹ Even greater was the variation reported by the Illinois committee. Whereas one school expected two hundred compositions a year, another exacted only one. The average requirement was eighteen.² The question "Who chooses the subjects for these compositions?" called forth a variety of answers. The Massachusetts report deprecated the fact that more than half of the schools permitted pupils to choose their own topics.³ The findings of the Illinois committee were exactly the opposite: eighty-seven schools, more than one-half of the group, reported that the teacher assigned the topics. In twenty schools the pupils chose their own, while in thirty-one others, their choice was subject to the approval of the teacher.⁴ No very specific information about the nature of the subjects was obtained. The New England committee, however, discovered that in less

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1. Parmenter, C. W., Collar, Wm. C., Groce, Byron, "English in Secondary Schools", The Academy, III (Jan. 1889), 528-99. A report of a committee of the Massachusetts Teachers' Association, December 1, 1888.
 2. Ray, W. H., Smith, Chas. A., Tucker, Carrie E., Leslie, J.O., "English in the High School", The Academy, IV (Apr. 1889), 190. A report presented at the meeting of the Northern Illinois High School Teachers' Association, at Kewanee, March 23, 1889.
 3. Parmenter, et al., 599.
 4. Ray, et al., 191.

than one-fourth of the schools topics were drawn from other departments of the school. The remainder reported topics of a miscellaneous character.¹ In the majority of the schools, according to the Illinois investigation, the teachers corrected the compositions. Although one hundred and twenty-three schools maintained that teachers did individual work with pupils in the correction of papers, the committee doubted whether the so-called individual work amounted to more than written comments in the margin. Re-writing of compositions after correction by the teacher was evidently demanded only when the original composition was very poor. One hundred and twenty-four schools reported that compositions were read before either the class or the school. However, it could scarcely be expected that all compositions be given a hearing. The larger schools in particular failed to report the reading of compositions before the class.²

Certainly these two surveys fail to show any uniformity of practice in composition teaching in the late 80's.

1. Parmenter, et al., 599.
2. Ray, et al., 190-91.

Composition as an Adjunct to other English Studies

Although composition was frequently taught in the academies and high schools as though it had absolutely no connection with any other subject, a study of the textbooks of the nineteenth century reveals the association of composition with other English studies. Until approximately 1850 composition was treated as an adjunct to grammar. Then the emphasis changed, and composition was more frequently found as a companion to rhetoric, which was in turn supplanted by literature about 1880. The earlier type of textbook did not suddenly disappear when the new one arrived on the scene. For example, at the close of the nineteenth century the three types of textbook are found together, though at the time the correlation of literature and composition was receiving the major emphasis.

Composition as an Adjunct to Grammar

Two types of composition exercises are suggested in some of the earliest grammars in use in America. The author of the British Grammar (1760), one of the most popular grammars imported and printed here, recommended dictation and letter writing. The main

purpose of the letter was apparently to provide students with an exercise in which "to examine every word by the Grammar Rules; and in every sentence they have composed, to oblige them to give an Account of the English Syntax and Construction."¹ Ward,² likewise, would have the student accompany his study of grammar with the composition of short letters. Suggestions such as these, however, are limited to the preface, and the books themselves do not make provision for composition exercises. Lyman, in his study of English grammar, gives Roswell Smith (1829)³ credit for including the first constructive work. The exercises are not really composition in the strictest sense. He does, however, provide for practice in sentence building by the sections on "Sentences to be written", in which he gives such directions as the following: "Will you compose two sentences, each having a different adjective pronoun?"⁴ The close association of grammar and composition is also seen in the title of a proposed book by W. Felch, A Com-

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1. [Anonymous,] The British Grammar, or an Essay in Four Parts, Towards Speaking and Writing the English Language Grammatically and Inditing Elegantly. London, 1760, IV, VI, XIV. See Lyman, op. cit., 127.
 2. Ward, Wm., English Grammar, x. See Lyman, op. cit., 127.
 3. Lyman, op. cit., 152.
 4. Smith, Roswell C., Eng. Gram. on the Productive System (1841), 58.

prehensive Grammar ...; designed to ... make the study of grammar and composition one and the same process.

Abridged from a work preparing for publication.

The writer insists that "Grammar and composition should be taught together" and to that end suggests that the class be called upon to compose sentences.¹ Whether the completed work ever appeared is doubtful, for no references to it have been found.

The interest of schools in general in constructive work is seen in the warm welcome² given Parker's Progressive Exercises in English Composition in 1837.

The book is an exception to the type in use during this period, for it is not a grammar, although the nature of many of the exercises would suggest that the author presupposes a knowledge of grammar. It provides a set of exercises to train pupils in correct expression. The preface postulates an added aim, to help pupils obtain ideas; however, little space is devoted to this important phase of composition. The student is inducted very gradually into the writing of long compositions, beginning with words such as lucubrations, nomenclature, and panegyrick to be used in sentences.³ Exercises

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1. Op. cit., 24.
 2. Cf. Chap. III, p. 172.
 3. Op. cit., 5-9.

in variety of expression and analysis and synthesis of compound sentences follow. After various other brief types of practice, the student attempts narration by filling in an outline provided for him and by amplifying short passages. A study of description, figures of speech, paraphrase and the rhetorical principles of clearness, unity, strength, and harmony precedes the writing of simple and complex themes. Assistance is given the student not only by models¹ but also by the suggestion of topics with sub-heads to be paraphrased, amplified, and variously expressed. The subjects suggested are of the usual abstract type, although a few demanding imagination, such as History of a Pin and History of a Needle are included.² The themes, likewise, are on general topics, such as war, peace,

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1. Model outlines such as the following are given to be expanded:

On the importance of a well spent youth.

1. All desire to arrive at old age; but few think of acquiring those virtues which alone can make it happy.
2. The life of man a building; youth the foundation.
3. All the later stages of life depend upon the good use made of the former.
4. Age, therefore, requires a well spent youth to render it happy.

Ibid., 76.

2. Ibid., 93-97.

youth, and old age.¹ Opportunity for moralizing is provided by the complex themes on such subjects as the following:

Delays are dangerous
Order is of universal importance.
Nip sin in the bud.
Trust not to appearances.
Avoid extremes.²

For approximately twenty years the course of study here outlined was widely followed, to judge by the tremendous sale of the book.

The inclusion of practice exercises now became an established part of the grammar texts. Greene, whose Analysis in 1846 practically revolutionized the teaching of grammar by making the sentence rather than the word the important unit, does not believe grammar can be successfully taught unless the pupil is required "to construct repeatedly the various forms of sentences and elements of sentences."³ In accordance with that suggestion he provides written exercises as early as page 13, where he advises in a footnote "that the practice of writing lessons should be adopted as a general rule." William Wells in A Grammar of the English

1. Ibid., 69.

2. Ibid., 75.

3. Greene, Samuel, A Treatise on the Structure of the English Language, 4.

Language (1846) suggests that the teacher write on the board lists of words to be used in sentences. He goes a step farther than most grammarians when he suggests that this exercise be followed by "several compositions of considerable length."¹

The later grammarians go beyond mere sentence exercises and devote entire sections to composition. Weld, in his English Grammar (improved edition, c. 1849) suggests compositions based on sense perception, and illustrates by the use of models. He does not devote more than seven pages, however, to the chapter on composition. Quackenbos (1851),² beginning with sentences of an elliptical type in which the student supplies the missing word, defers construction of sentences to the middle of the book. He is, however, more generous in his assignment of space to composition, devoting forty pages to models and plans to guide the student. Although he begins with concrete objects, his topics on the whole are scarcely an improvement over Parker. After Honesty, Gambling, and The Ruins of Time have been exhausted, the twelve-year-old may begin on Whatever is, is right and Heaven from all

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1. Op. cit., 24. See Lyman, op. cit., 152.
 2. First Lessons in Composition. 1859 edition.

creatures hides the book of fate.¹

The titles of many of the later textbooks attest to the close association of grammar and composition. Peter Bullion in 1853 published Practical Lessons in English Grammar and Composition for Young Beginners in which he devotes one brief chapter to composition, explaining that all the preceding lessons on grammar are introductory to written expression.² Tower and Tweed (1855) call their textbook A Grammar of Composition. They undertake to supply the student, not only the necessary grammar, but also a method of arrangement. In the scant thirty-two pages devoted to composition, exercises such as the following are given to aid the student in writing:

A Journey from New York to Albany by Water.³

Direction 1. Write, in short sentences, the time of starting, from what part of the city, name of steamboat, prominent places passed, in their order; occurrences on board the boat in order of time; time of arrival.

Direction 2. Group the sentences when written, so as to form a connected narrative.

Direction 3. Describe the scenery on the river from time to time. Describe West Point; make any historical allusion that is interesting. Give your impressions of the Highlands. Describe Albany; and give any thing interesting that you know of its history.

1. Op. cit., 180-181.

2. Op. cit., 130.

3. Op. cit., 204.

Direction 4. Complete the composition by introducing, in proper place, each of the above descriptions and historical allusions.

Their list of miscellaneous subjects is not so heavily weighted with abstract themes as the earlier lists are. Such topics as Columbus, Washington, Franklin, The Feudal System, The Art of Printing, The Amazon, The Ganges, The Pyramids¹ permit the student to draw on the subject matter of other courses.

The substitution of language study for grammar drill is reflected in the series of books which Swinton began to publish in 1874 "with special reference to the rational remodeling recently accomplished, in the Courses of Study in our public schools -- a remodeling in which Language-training for the first time receives the attention that is its due."² In contrast with earlier textbook makers, Swinton does not use composition exercises merely as a means of teaching grammar. With him, correct expressions, as well as a knowledge of grammar, is the end in view. Consequently, we find in his School Composition (1874) that written exercises are not deferred until the end of the book, but begin with the very first division and extend throughout the book.

1. Ibid., 226-28.

2. Swinton, William, School Composition, Preface, 13.

Notable also is his prescription of extended composition rather than isolated sentences. Pupil criticism is encouraged, and guide questions such as the following are set: "Is each sentence a simple sentence? Does the composition contain any errors in spelling? In capitalizing?"¹ Another modern note is the gradual introduction of punctuation rules. Earlier textbook writers usually devote one chapter to punctuation and then consider the subject settled. Swinton wisely presents one rule at a time and then summarizes at the end of the book. The chief lack of the book is its failure to aid the student in developing his ideas. He recognizes the difficulty pupils have in finding material, but instead of assisting them to find it for themselves,-- in their own thought and experiences -- he provides notes as a basis for composition. He confesses in the preface that his book is concerned with how to express rather than with what, for it is his conviction "that training in the Art of Expression is as much as can be wisely aimed at in school composition. Pupils must first be taught how to write at all, before they can be shown how to write well..."²

1. Ibid., 5.

2. Ibid., Preface, 13.

His composition topics are still largely of the conventional type, themes with their methodical arrangement according to set heads still being included. However, he does suggest in addition essays, discussions according to a plan but more informal in nature, on such topics as A Taste for Reading, On Cruelty to Animals, The Good and the Evil of War, Rain -- its Uses, and On Foreign Travel.¹ Pride and The Uses of Adversity still find a place in his list of miscellaneous subjects, but it is refreshing to find Female Suffrage and The Advantages of Life Insurance supplanting Female Virtues and The Advantages of a Well-Spent Youth.²

Swinton's book set a new fashion in grammar texts, and the next important combined grammar and composition to appear, Reed and Kellogg's Higher Lessons in English, professed to make the "science of the language... tributary to the art of expression."³ Even a cursory examination of the book, however, leads one to doubt that statement, for there is great attention paid to diagramming. The authors say the diagrams may be omitted and the work remain intact, but most schools seized eagerly upon the new device, thus making their

1. Ibid., 108-9.

2. Ibid., 111-112.

3. From the sub-title of the book.

instruction more mechanical than ever. Only thirty pages at the end of the book are devoted to composition, with very little attention to the composition as a whole. The paragraph and outline receive some consideration. Recognizing the need for assistance to the pupil in writing a theme, the authors devote one lesson to that subject. Very briefly they give directions for choosing a subject, accumulating the material, constructing a framework, writing, and attending to the mechanics. Consideration of pupil interests is evident in the topics suggested for themes:

Apples and Nuts
 A Pleasant Evening
 My Walk to School
 Pluck
 My Native Town
 A Day in the Woods
 Winter Sports
 Our Sunday School
 Umbrellas¹

In spite of the avowed intent of the authors, Higher Lessons in English, which remained popular during the early years of the next century, encouraged a formal type of language work.

Composition instruction, when given in connection with grammar, as revealed by this survey of

1. Op. cit., 258-59.

of grammar-composition texts, was limited mainly to the mechanics. Although some attention was given to the arrangement of material, the development of ideas was slighted. This advance is noticeable: whereas in the earlier texts composition exercises are given as a means of implanting the rules of grammar, in the later, correct expression is recognized as an end in itself. Also there is a change in composition subjects from those of an abstract, general nature to topics related more closely to the interests of the pupil.

Composition as an Adjunct to Rhetoric

Although rhetoric was taught in the early American school with the aim of developing power of expression, the manner in which it was taught developed critical rather than constructive ability. Perhaps even that statement is too optimistic, for it can scarcely be expected that critical ability resulted from mere memorization of rhetorical rules. As early as 1823 one teacher, William Russell, did recognize the need for bridging the gap between theory and practice. The method he used is set forth in his Grammar of Composition, which we have already discussed. His idea did not fall upon very fertile soil, however, for emphasis

continued until the middle of the century to be placed on rhetoric of a very formal sort.

In 1854 appeared a textbook - a self-styled composition and rhetoric -- which for the next twenty-five or thirty years determined the nature of composition instruction. Quackenbos, encouraged by the success of his First Lessons in Composition in which grammar and composition are closely associated, published Advanced Course of Composition and Rhetoric. Believing that the student should have a preliminary course in rhetoric before beginning to write himself, he defers prose composition to page 325, devoting to it not more than seventy-five pages. Punctuation receives exhaustive treatment, every known rule, as well as the rarest of exceptions, being discussed in a like number of pages. The treatment of rhetoric is not quite so exhaustive, but the approach is far too scholarly to meet the practical needs of the student, in spite of the numerous exercises. The section on prose composition gives directions ~~to the student in the selection of a formal scheme~~ of analysis and amplification. To aid the student, materials are given in outline form to be developed into essays. Literary models are included to illustrate various types of discourse. There is evident an earnest

attempt on the part of the author to give aid to the student in the performance of a difficult task. Unfortunately, he methodizes his subject too much, so that composition becomes a rule of thumb matter. The importance of having ideas to express and the development of those ideas are slighted. The suggested topics are never close to the everyday lives of pupils. Luther and Calvin, Firmness and Obstinacy, The History of a Pin, The Ruins of Time, The Fickleness of Fortune, Is truth invincible, if left to grapple with falsehood on equal terms? are typical of the subjects he proposes.¹

Professor John S. Hart of the College of New Jersey published in 1870 A Manual of Composition and Rhetoric which quickly rivaled Quackenbos in popularity and eventually outstripped it. Although the general plan of his work is much the same, the presentation is far simpler. This simplification of a difficult subject is especially evident in his section on Invention. Instead of overwhelming the student with rules for writing he presents a series of pupil-written models in illustration of the various types of composition under consideration. The topics suggested, although

1. Op. cit., 427-35.

following the conventional type in some instances, are on the whole an improvement over Quackenbos. In his list are found the following: An Encounter with a Burglar, The Market, Influence of Steam, I Told You So, Girls' Amusements and Boys' Contrasted.¹ Abstract discussions still find a place, but Hart urges that pupils confine themselves to those with which they are familiar. He illustrates by a composition on Fear, suggesting as additional topics Friendship, Hatred, Ambition, The Danger of Bad Company, and The Use of Profane Language.²

Another book representative of the type popular during the last two decades of the nineteenth century is D. J. Hill's The Elements of Rhetoric and Composition. His purpose is not to write a treatise on rhetoric but rather "to furnish a compendium of rules for guidance in the art of writing."³ Consequently, he begins, contrary to the practice of all of his predecessors, with Invention instead of Style. Step by step he leads pupils through the entire process of

1. Op. cit., 342-46.
 2. Ibid., 315-17.
 3. Op. cit., iii.

writing a composition. True it is that he includes much that is not of practical value to pupils, but he goes to a surprising extent consider the child and not just the subject. For example, in the exercises in invention he gives the following directions: "Select from the following list such subjects as are suited to yourself as a writer..."¹ The topics he suggests are mixed, some of the Quackenbos type still finding a place. Among those that mark an advance over the traditional sort are the following: Who will be the next President?, The Prospects of Foreign War, The Benefits of the Electric Telegraph, What we owe to Government, The Duties of an American Citizen, Why and How do we Pay Taxes?²

Belonging to the same period is Brainerd Kellogg's A Textbook of Rhetoric... with Exhaustive Practice in Composition (1860). Although Kellogg follows Hart's arrangement in beginning with Invention, the treatment is entirely different. Instead of considering the composition as a whole in his first section, he discusses the construction of sentences and paragraphs. A brief section is devoted to the framework of the composition. The "exhaustive practice" also proves to be

1. Ibid., 210.

2. Ibid., 209-218.

disappointing, for most of the exercises are of the one-sentence type rather than in extended composition.

The composition-rhetorics thus far cited are all written by eastern teachers, and with a few exceptions, follow the traditional pattern. It remained for a western writer, Alphonso G. Newcomer, professor of English in the Leland Stanford Junior University, to blaze a new trail in composition textbooks. Writers before him had recognized the importance of the subject matter, discussing it at length in the prefaces of their books. But their texts seldom live up to the promise of the preface. Newcomer believes that the matter is more important than the manner, and he devotes his entire book, A Practical Course in English Composition (1893), to assisting the student to find material and to work it into interesting compositions. Rules of grammar and rhetoric find no place in it. It is purely a composition text to be used to supplement a more technical grammatical and rhetorical treatise. He suggests various types of composition, discusses their possibilities, and cites models, frequently written by pupils. A later book by Newcomer, Elements of Rhetoric, A Course in Plain Prose Composition, although it makes a study of the elements of style, preserves the same

point of view. Not the word, but the composition as a whole receives first attention. How widely Newcomer's books were used it is difficult to say, for no references to them have been found. It can readily be seen, however, that they would not find immediate acceptance in a period when the demand was for the more formal texts, such as Hart's and Hill's.

Representative of the type of textbook to achieve popularity in the early years of the twentieth century is Scott and Denney's Composition-Rhetoric (1897). The preface sets forth the point of view of the authors as follows:

First, it is desirable that a closer union than has prevailed hitherto be brought about between secondary composition and secondary rhetoric. That rhetoric in the high school should be regarded as a thing apart from composition, that it should be regarded simply as a "course", to be pursued and passed and put out of remembrance as quickly as possible, is not good either for rhetoric or for composition. In this book, as the name signifies, no such apartness has been recognized. The rhetoric which is found in this book is meant to be the theory of the pupil's practice, nothing more, -- the explicit statement of principles which are implicit in all successful elementary composition. If here and there the temptation to put in rhetorical furniture which no gentleman's mind should be without, has not been wholly thrust aside, such temptation has, at least, been manfully resisted.¹

1. Op. cit., iii.

Much that is not immediately useful to the student, such as a study of figures of speech, discussion of poetry, and division into types of discourse, has been consigned to the appendix. Great emphasis is placed upon a study of the paragraph. The importance of the development of ideas is likewise stressed:

A composition is regarded not as a dead form, to be analyzed into its component parts, but as a living product of an active, creative mind. The paragraph is compared to a plant, springing up in the soil of the mind from a germinal idea, and in the course of its development assuming naturally a variety of forms...¹

In contrast to such chapter headings as Purity, Precision, and Harmony, typical of the older texts, we find these:

What to Say, How to Say It, In What Order to Say It,

How Much to Say, What Not to Say. The illustrative

material used, although from literary sources, is

interesting in nature. The topics suggested for com-

positions mark a complete break with tradition. The

following show that the authors have kept in mind the

range of pupil interests: "How is the tire of a bicycle

repaired when it has been punctured?", "How does a

baseball pitcher throw a ball so as to make it curve?",²

"The way I used to make a kite",³ "A corner of the

1. Ibid., iv.

2. Ibid., 4.

3. Ibid., 10.

old barn",¹ "Habits of ants",² "Cooking and sewing should be taught in the schools".³ Scott and Denney's text marks the triumph of the art over the science of rhetoric.

On the whole, the composition-rhetorics of the nineteenth century, like the grammar-compositions, emphasize rules rather than constructive work. There is noticeable in the rhetorics an advance from one-sentence practice exercises to extended compositions which, however, are of a very formal type. As in the grammars, the major emphasis is on the manner of expression rather than on the thought. At the very close of the century the importance of content begins to be recognized and is reflected in the increased attention given to finding suitable ideas and to their development. The later books are not so much treatises on rhetoric as they are practical manuals to help the student with his immediate problems.

Composition as an Adjunct to Literature

The last two decades of the nineteenth

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1. Ibid., 361.
 2. Ibid., 363.
 3. Ibid., 367.

century found composition with a new companion -- literature. This association came as a result of the requirements of the colleges, according to which composition topics on the entrance examinations were taken from a list of prescribed books. Harvard set the fashion in 1874 (see Chapter IV), and gradually other colleges followed suit. The secondary schools, since they were largely preparatory in nature, were forced to fit their instruction to these requirements.

The close relationship of composition and literature was especially characteristic of the last year of the high school work, when the whole instruction was pointed toward the entrance examinations. Often the instruction was of the most perfunctory sort. Pupils read the prescribed books outside of class and then wrote abstracts.¹ When these were corrected, it

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1. "In the choice of subjects, although great freedom was given to the students, all the themes were confined to the works prescribed for Harvard College. If I remember correctly, the following were among the subjects last year: 'Silas Marner Reclaimed,' 'The Character of Lord Clive,' 'The Ancient Mariner,' 'The religious element in the Ancient Mariner,' 'A comparison between the Portia in Julius Caesar and the Portia in the Merchant of Venice,' 'The Alhambra and its surroundings,' 'The Character of Burley,' etc. From this list it can easily be seen that our preparation in composition aided to no slight degree in our English examination." See Harvard College, Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. [1892], 136.
(Note continued on page 305)

was mainly the mechanical errors which received attention.

Two textbooks of the 30's reflect the new method. The first, Lucy A. Chittenden's, The Elements of English Composition (1885), is a text designed for the lower grades of the high school "before the pupil has attained the maturity of mind necessary for the formal study of rhetoric."¹ The author has retained only those grammatical and rhetorical principles which she believes immediately useful to the student and has followed them with abundant exercises. An even more

1. (Note continued from page 304)

"In the preparatory year the written work consisted principally of paraphrasing, as laid down in Chittenden's Elements of English Composition. During the Junior and Middle years, there were a few written exercises required, generally the same in character as those of the preparatory year. During the Senior year we wrote synopses and summaries. For example, after reading Macaulay's Essay on Lord Clive, we were asked to write a brief summary of the most important incidents. When we had read Bacon's Essays, we were given several titles from the essays, and were expected to write in our own language the substance of the essay we selected. In the same manner, after reading Hawthorne's House of the Seven Gables, we were permitted to choose from several subjects, such as Clifford and Phoebe, The Old Puncheon House, Hepzibah, etc., and were then expected to write the story as it occurred in the House of the Seven Gables. One young man, who ventured to make the criticism that he thought Hawthorne's depiction of Hepzibah, as an old maid, was faulty from the fact that Hepzibah did not have a cat, was ridiculed by the instructor for mentioning something foreign to the character of the composition." Ibid., 144-45.

1. Op. cit., iii.

unique feature of her book is a graded plan for developing composition ability by a use of literary selections. Practice is first given in reproducing the thought of a poem. The next step is the development at length of the ideas briefly suggested in a poem. Paraphrase follows, and then the pupil is ready for imaginative compositions. In the additional topics suggested for compositions, Miss Chittenden does not limit the student to literary materials, though she encourages the use of books. She says,

Whatever you are interested in and wish to pursue more fully, will furnish an excellent theme for writing.¹

Probably the most popular composition text during the last decade of the nineteenth century was Lockwood's Lessons in English, Adapted to the Study of American Classics. According to a plan outlined in the introduction (xii-xiii), a study of the text is to go hand in hand with "a critical study of some of the best American authors."² For instance, after the pupil has mastered the first chapter, on the history of the language, he studies the biography of Irving given in a later chapter. Then while he is learning about Anglo-Saxon words (Chapter II), he reads as much as he can

1. Ibid., 166.

2. Op. cit., xi.

about Irving's life and works. Class discussion of the author and his works follows, and then the pupil writes for himself a biography of the author. Class study of a particular essay is undertaken with reference to meaning, diction, and allusions. Classical elements, figures of speech, punctuation, and capitals are studied in turn, and as each new principle is learned, the student is expected to apply it to literature. In keeping with the current emphasis on practice, suggestions are given for five-minute written exercises at the beginning of the class period.

The plan outlined here, with local modifications, was undoubtedly followed in a large number of high schools, for the book found wide acceptance. Miss Lockwood evolved the method in the course of her teaching in the Hillhouse High School in New Haven, Connecticut.¹

Supplementary Aids

A favorite device to stimulate interest in composition was the exhibition which, in the earlier years, afforded almost the only opportunity, aside from translation, for practice in writing. A regulation

1. Ibid., vi.

drawn up by the first school society of Farmington, New Hampshire, in 1836, directed the overseers to appoint at their discretion, from time to time, ... public exercises for such of the children in the several schools as may have made the best proficiency either in reading, spelling, speaking, rehearsing, composition or such like exercises, either in the schools separately or in a general meeting, and confer on such as most deserve it some honorary mark of distinction.¹

Farmington did not at this time have a high school, but advanced work was usually offered in the district schools.

Annual exhibitions in the form of an oral examination, or sometimes supplementing the examination, were also held. In the private schools of North Carolina the boys read their own compositions in the presence of the trustees and the assembled guests, but the essays of the girls were frequently read by some visitor.² Girls did, sometimes, present their own papers. At the Lincolnton Female Academy of North Carolina, on the second day, after all the classes had been examined, "several very interesting original compositions were read by the young ladies, displaying a very correct taste."³

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1. Hinsdale, B.A. "Documents Illustrative of Amer. Ed. Hist.", In Rept. of the U.S. Com. of Ed., 1892-93, II, 1254.
 2. At the examination of the Mordecai Female Seminary in Warrenton, North Carolina, reported in The Star, July 19, 1811, compositions "were read to the audience by Judge Taylor." Coon, Charles, North Carolina Schools and Academies, 600.
 3. Coon, op. cit., 213.

In this instance, the reading of compositions seems to have been part of an exhibition rather than of the examination.

Gradually these exhibitions developed into the graduation exercises at the close of the high school course. The programs presented were lengthy affairs consisting of music, essays, and declamations. In some of these closing exercises both the juniors and the seniors participated, in others only the seniors.¹ The anniversary program of the Hartford High School, April 20, 1868, given entirely by members of the senior class, included nineteen numbers. A Latin salutatory, twelve essays, five orations, and a final number, a combined essay and valedictory address were presented.² The Sherwood Select School (New York) sometimes had as a feature of its "Last Day" exercises, the reading of a collection of the best compositions of the past term. Three or four students who had been selected as editors, copied the compositions on sheets of foolscap. They usually gave the collection some fanciful name, such as "Snowflakes", or "Autumn Leaves."³

As a rule, the compositions read or shown at

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1. Hertzler, The Rise of the Pub. H. S. in Conn., 108-10.
 2. Ibid., 113.
 3. Jacobs, Lucy, A Hist. Sketch of S. S. S. (1871-1911), 9-10.

the examinations or exhibitions were prepared beforehand, but the Central High School of Philadelphia in 1855 reported a different method. For three successive evenings during the week before commencement, students gathered in the large lecture room of the high school for public exercises in writing and speaking. Just before the declamations began, topics were announced and students wrote while the speeches went on.¹ At the close of the declamations, the composers rose in their places and read their essays. "These exercises," the controllers reported, "are a better test of the intellectual training which the pupils have received, than any other which the school affords."²

Listed in the regular course of study of many schools were "Rhetorical Exercises", which were required weekly, fortnightly, or monthly, and were usually open to visitors.³ Friday afternoon was the favorite time for these, though some schools preferred evening meetings, since there "is something ... in an

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1. A visitor was often asked to suggest the subject. At a public exercise held July 1, 1858, Professor Henry Coppée of the University of Pennsylvania suggested "Manners are the Shadows of Virtues." See Edmonds, History of the Central High School, 234.
 2. From the 37th Annual Report of the Controller of Public Schools for 1855, Philadelphia. See Barnard's A. J. of Ed., I (May, 1856), 467.
 3. "Rhetorical exercises occur every Friday during the (Note continued on page 311)

evening scene that is adapted to give life and interest to such exercises."¹ Compositions and declamations, interspersed with music, usually formed the programs.

Occasionally recitations, debates, or plays were presented. The program of the Worcester High School for Friday, November 18, 1859, commencing at two o'clock, is typical.² There were thirty-six numbers listed, of which number eighteen was "Recess". Five musical numbers were interspersed with thirteen recitations of poetry, thirteen declamations, and four original compositions, the boys declaiming, the girls providing the rest of the entertainment. If one may judge by the titles, the compositions afforded considerable variety: The Lost Found, Wickliffe, Poets and Poetry, A Summer Sunset. Here girls were allowed to participate. In the Black River Literary and Religious Institute (New York),

3. (Continued from page 310)
 fall and winter terms." From the Annual Catalogue of the Public Schools, Appleton, Wisconsin, 1886-87, 19. See Stout, Devel. of the H. S. Cur., 143.
 At the Black River Literary and Religious Institute (N. Y. S.) one evening a week was reserved for the presentation of the best speeches and compositions. See Univ. S. N. Y., 54th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1840), 98.

1. Ibid.

2. Grizzell, Origin and Devel. of the H. S. in New Eng., 339-41.

however, although the best compositions of the female department were presented, the girls were not permitted to read them to the audience.¹

Probably many of the rhetorical programs were carried through in a perfunctory manner by both teachers and pupils, especially when the exercises were not public. Participants were chosen usually in one of two ways: either the best writers and speakers were put on the program, or the school was divided into groups so that each one was accorded an opportunity of a public appearance. The Johnston High School (Rhode Island) reported in 1895 that the school had been divided into four classes, each class in turn assuming the responsibility for a Friday afternoon program. Pupils wrote essays on subjects connected with the regular class work, and after these had been corrected by the teacher and rewritten by the student, they were rehearsed. The aim was to secure improvement in both written and oral expression.²

That students did not always take kindly to these exercises may readily be surmised. One student expresses his feelings toward them as follows:

1. U.S.N.Y., 54th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1840), 98.
2. 25th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of R. I. (1895), App., 119.

Incidentally we received a modicum of practice in the composition of good English in those dubious exercises commonly called rhetorical. These unspeakable things occurred during the last term of our Junior year, the class meeting once a week to listen to essays from the girls and "orations" from the boys. At stated intervals during the last year of the course also, the boys appeared before the whole school to deliver their slumber-inviting messages. In composing these doubtful pieces of English we received some training, but we were criticised merely on our "thought" and "delivery", while nothing was ever said about the English of our productions, the primary object of this exercise apparently being to make speakers and thinkers rather than writers.¹

An additional method of stimulating interest in composition was the awarding of prizes for the best essays. Sometimes a medal, prize money, or other award was made for the best essay produced during the year. That was the practice at the Litchfield School in Connecticut.² In other schools special prize contests were held. In Ashland, Pennsylvania (1892), a prize was given for the best impromptu essay on The Soliloquy of a School Desk.³ Providence, Rhode Island, annually awarded a medal for the best composition on a prescribed topic.⁴ Frequently the alumni or friends of the school established a prize to encourage exercises in composition. That was the case in Woonsocket, Rhode

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1. Harv. Col., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. (1897) 516, #157.
 2. Vanderpoel, Chronicles of a Pioneer School, 210.
 3. Rept. of the Supt. of Pub. Instr. of the Commonwealth of Pa., (1892), 133.
 4. 25th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of R.I. (1895), 149-50.

Island, where the alumni offered prizes of five and three dollars for the best compositions written by members of the junior class.¹ At Phillips Exeter Academy, Dr. Abner Merrill established, in 1896, a fund of three thousand dollars for prizes in the English department. It was his purpose "to encourage earnest and intelligent attention to the art of writing English and the art of public speaking." The yearly income of one hundred and fifty dollars was divided equally between the composition and declamation contests.²

At times the rhetorical were in the form of prize contests. The Prize Rhetorical Exhibition of the Bartlett High School, New-London, Connecticut, on May 1, 1856, was a program of twenty-six numbers, mainly selections from well known speeches. There were five original compositions on topics not very closely connected with school-boy interests: Self Education, Love of National Character, Triumphs of Christianity, Benefits of Education, National Monuments. Prizes were awarded to the three best performers.³

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1. 26th Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of R. I. (1896), 5.
 2. Adams, O. F., Some Famous American Schools, 97. App. 117.
 3. Hertzler, op. cit., 109.

Literary societies for the development of skill in composition and declamation were also formed. The New Britain High School (Connecticut) had, in 1854, two such societies, Alpha and Delta, membership in one or the other of which was compulsory for all pupils. They held weekly private meetings for which exercises of various kinds were prepared. Once in three weeks the two societies held a competitive meeting before the whole school. Judges were present to determine which society had done the better work.¹

The high school in Waterbury, Connecticut, in 1871 had a debating club for boys, the purpose of which, according to the constitution was "to promote the arts of oratory, declamation, and composition, and to secure a thorough acquaintance with parliamentary rules."² The character of the meetings was undoubtedly similar to that of the literary societies, a number of private sessions in preparation for a public program.³

1. Hertzler, op. cit., 114-16.

2. Ibid., 117.

3. Probably not many essays were written by any one student for these societies, but they did serve to stimulate interest. One student reported that he never wrote more than six essays during the three years that he was a member. He did, however, do much extemporaneous speaking. See Harv. Col., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet. [1892], 123.

When school papers were first introduced to encourage composition work it is difficult to say. The Whitesboro Academy (New York) reported, in 1836, a semi-monthly paper "sustained by the voluntary contributions of the pupils."¹ The earliest papers were, of course, in manuscript form, and were read before the school at intervals. Hertzler reports two such papers in the Hartford High School (Connecticut) previous to May, 1848, The Rivulet edited by the girls, and The Excelsior by the boys.² At the Girls' High School of Portland, Maine, from 1851 to 1863, there were likewise two papers, The Constellation and The Aspirant, which were acknowledged rivals. The usual poetry, essays, jokes and school news, besides expression of student opinion were found in them.³ Worcester, Massachusetts, also had, about the middle of the century, a manuscript paper read before the school once a week. The influence of this paper on the students is described in an editorial which appeared in a later printed paper:

Ambition to have one's composition published served as a stimulant, ever urging to continual efforts at improvement, and the regular reading of the paper

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1. Univ. of the S. of N.Y., 50th Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1836), 97.
 2. Hertzler, op. cit., 121.
 3. Grizzell, op. cit., 346.

was always looked forward to with interest by all, and with some fear and trembling by those whose reputation as composition writers were at stake.¹

In the larger city schools these manuscript papers soon gave way to printed journals. Although some were humorous in nature, the majority were serious. The Scholar's Experiment, a paper begun as early as 1850, at the Middletown (Connecticut) High School, declared its purpose to be to interest the students "in writing original essays, and by seeing their productions in print, to correct their errors, and to stimulate them to more care in preparing their compositions, than they otherwise would bestow upon them."² The High School Thesaurus of Worcester, Massachusetts, established in 1859, had as one of its major purposes to "improve the character of the compositions."³

Although these journals frequently had a very short-lived existence, while they flourished they afforded valuable training, sometimes the only training in composition. Teachers and pupils were agreed on their value. In 1895 the Princeton High School, designating a school paper as a stimulus to composition writing,

1. Ibid., 351.

2. Hertzel, op. cit., 121.

3. Grizzell, op. cit., 352.

recommended it to teachers as a valuable aid in teaching a difficult subject.¹ The editor of a school paper in western New York evaluated his journalistic experience as follows:

I am inclined to think that the most valuable training of all was my experience as editor of our high school periodical, which always was "hard up for copy" and accordingly provided me with much experience in careful composition.²

The difficulty in securing satisfactory composition work is attested by other devices developed by ingenious schoolmasters to stimulate interest. Whitehall Academy (New York), in 1848, tried the following plan:

We have prepared an "anonymous box" appended to a side light, after the manner of a "letter box" in our post offices, into which scholars, at all times, unobserved, can drop their communications. These are

1. Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of N. J. (1895), 276.
2. Harv. Univ., Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet.

(1897), 452, #54. Other students speak as follows of the value of the training received from school papers:

"In addition to this required school work, I did considerable voluntary work, as I was elected into a literary society and was also made an editor of the school paper. In these positions I aimed at being a universal genius, writing, or trying to write, poetry, essays, and stories. Although I feel somewhat short of my ideal, I think that I was helped by this voluntary work more than by my prescribed work."

Ibid., [1892], 147-8.

"I was fortunate enough to pass my examination in English for Harvard. But I attribute this as much to my experience as associate editor on the literary monthly, during the latter half of my Senior year, as to my instruction in English received while there."

Ibid. [1892], 145.

taken out weekly, examined, and selections read from them to the school by one or more pupils. We have found it a very profitable and pleasing exercise. This, it will be understood, is not a substitute for our regular compositions but a voluntary exercise in addition to them.¹

In Johnston, Rhode Island, the principal copied a plan used in the Worcester High School (Massachusetts) for encouraging merit in essay work. The best essays were pasted in an indexed scrap-book which was placed in the library.²

Summary

Although methods of composition teaching at the close of the nineteenth century were still far from ideal, it is not to be denied that there was real progress made in the period 1750 to 1900. One major improvement was the substitution, in the later decades, of the aim of accuracy for the earlier objective of mental discipline. Inadequate as the later aim was, it at least directed attention to effective expression, which previously had been almost entirely overlooked in the zeal to develop the mind.

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1. Univ. of the S. of N. Y., 62nd Ann. Rept. of the Regts. (1848), 169.
 2. 22nd Ann. Rept. of the Bd. of Ed. ... of R.I. (1892), App., 78.

An important change occurred also in the approach to composition. Prior to the decade 1830-40, grammar and rhetoric were considered prerequisites to written expression. Let the child learn the rules first, and then he will be able to write was the belief. The introduction of Pestalozzian ideas during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, however, effected a reform. Consequently, there was a complete reversal of procedure, the inductive supplanting the deductive method. Practice in composition was no longer deferred until the child had completely mastered grammar and rhetoric, but was introduced almost as soon as the pupil could write. The study of grammar was postponed until the child was more mature and better able to comprehend the rules. At the close of the century rhetoric was fast disappearing as a separate study, the Committee of Ten recommending for the last year of the high school merely a summary of principles already learned through actual practice.

The earliest method of teaching composition was through translation. Even after other methods were introduced, students in the classical course were not required to have additional training in composition

beyond that afforded in translation from Latin or Greek. It was considered satisfactory training until in the 1890's Harvard revealed the inadequacies of the system. According to the report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric, it not only fostered a barbaric "translation" English, but failed to give much actual practice in written expression since in the majority of schools translations were oral rather than written.

When English composition as such first came into the curriculum, no special training was needed to teach it. The instructor assigned a topic, the pupil struggled with it as best he could, and then on the appointed day the results were read to the assembled school. Since the aim was to develop the faculties of the mind, no simple, everyday topics would suffice, but abstract, philosophical subjects were the rule. Neither was an informal discussion of the subject sufficient, but a very formal development according to set heads was required. The result was that essay writing, except for the fluent few, was an abhorred task in the performance of which students resorted to many dishonest practices. There were a few exceptional teachers like

John Brace and William Russell who realized that it was necessary to prepare the student for writing by preliminary discussions which not only developed ideas, but also aroused interest.

A definite advance in the teaching of composition was made when secondary school teachers of composition borrowed from the Pestalozzians the technique of the object lesson. From the 1830's to the 1850's model lessons illustrating conversations about things found a place in the educational periodicals. At the same time, attention was directed to the importance of arousing the interest of the child. Simpler subjects, closer to the everyday experiences of children were recommended.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century textbooks appeared designed to aid the pupil with the subject matter of his composition. The pupil began simply with reproductions of stories and was led gradually to original composition. When, during the same period, the study of literature became popular in the high schools, composition topics were drawn largely from the books read. In fact, composition writing became a matter of mere reproduction.

Accuracy, the watchword of the last two decades

of the nineteenth century, had both a good and a bad influence on method. It encouraged undue emphasis on the mechanics of writing to the neglect of content. Much time was given to exercises in the correction of false syntax. On the other hand, it was recognized that if the student is to be accurate, he must have abundant practice in writing. Hence, frequent short compositions were recommended.

The increased attention to composition, particularly after 1890, brought up the question of a special teacher of composition. If the subject was so important, certainly there was need of a teacher especially trained to handle written expression. On the other hand, it was argued that training in English should not be limited just to the English classroom, but should be given incidentally in all subjects. The specialists carried the day.

Examination of textbooks indicates that training in written expression was at various times linked with other English subjects. Constructive exercises for the illustration of grammatical rules were provided in grammar texts as early as 1829. The emphasis, however, is on sentence exercises rather than on the composition as a whole. Later in the century the

composition-grammar texts recognize the importance of composition as an end in itself rather than as a mere device to inculcate rules of grammar. Consequently the composition as a whole receives more attention. About the middle of the nineteenth century composition began to perform for rhetoric the same service it had earlier performed for grammar. A similar progression may also be noted from the isolated sentence to the whole composition. The companion of composition from about 1880 on was literature, which was taught not so much in its own right, but as a source of composition topics.

Schoolmasters resorted to many supplementary aids in order to stimulate interest in composition. One of the earliest devices was the exhibition, held usually at the close of the school year, at which the best compositions were read. This developed gradually into the commencement exercise for which seniors were required to prepare a graduation essay. Prizes were frequently offered as an added incentive. Literary societies and school papers also afforded opportunity for the encouragement of composition. Probably the most widely used device was the rhetorical, frequently held once a week, for the reading of compositions and

the presentation of declamations. According to the evidence of pupil participants, the rhetorical was universally hated and feared.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The conclusions reached in this study will be briefly presented in answer to the questions propounded in the introduction.

I. When and where was English composition first taught in American secondary schools? What influences brought it into the curriculum?

Composition teaching was introduced into American secondary schools in 1751 by Benjamin Franklin, who in that year opened his academy in Philadelphia. Two influences led to its inclusion in the curriculum: (1) popular demand for more practical subjects than those taught in the Latin grammar schools; and (2) the popularization in the colonies of the educational theories of such men as Locke, Turnbull, and Milton, advocates of increased attention to the vernacular.

II. How rapidly was the teaching of English composition introduced into American secondary schools?

Although the English department of Franklin's academy was short-lived, other schools gradually began to teach composition. As early as 1763 it had entered

a New York school. In New England, the home of the Latin grammar school, composition did not find a place until 1789, when Boston introduced it, limiting it, however, to the curriculum of the reading and writing schools. In the southern states progress was even slower, for there is no evidence of much of any composition instruction before 1800.

The year 1820 is an important one in the history of composition teaching, for with the establishment of the high school, designed to fit youth for the more practical aspects of life, composition teaching received new impetus. Further incentive to the teaching of written expression was found in the reports of visitors to European schools. When Stowe (1836), Bache (1839), and Mann (1843) described the attention given to written expression in England and Germany, American schools were inspired to emulation. From 1826 on, additional encouragement was furnished by the journals of education which gave space to a discussion of methods of composition teaching. A powerful champion of the subject was Henry Barnard, who as head of the education system in the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island was able to put into practice his ideas about composition. A growing interest in composition teaching

is indicated by the appearance of composition textbooks. Before 1832 there were no important texts, but in that year appeared Parker's Progressive Exercises, which had a remarkable sale. The stream of textbooks which followed attests to the increased attention paid to composition.

Although by 1867 composition was included in the course of study of the majority of city high schools as shown by Barnard's survey, instruction in the subject was largely incidental. Usually there was no separate course in composition, and mention of the subject was relegated to a footnote, "Composition and declamation throughout the course." In the college preparatory course, even as late as the close of the nineteenth century, it was customary to omit the work in written expression. In the commercial courses, however, which began to appear about the middle of the nineteenth century, composition invariably found a place. Similarly, in the education of girls it was considered an important item, taking the place of the declamation taught to the boys.

Why was composition considered of such small importance before 1890? One powerful reason was the dominance of English grammar, which had entered the

curriculum at the same time composition did. The grammar method of learning written expression had greater prestige, since it had for years been the accepted method of teaching Latin. When, about 1875, the enthusiasm for grammar began to subside, composition was given a chance. However, even when the master was favorably disposed toward the teaching of composition, the subject received little attention because of the increased burden placed on the instructor. When a single schoolmaster had to teach ten or twelve subjects, there was little time left for the reading of essays. Particularly in the classical, or college preparatory, course composition was likely to be slighted. Written expression was not a prerequisite for college entrance, but Greek and Latin were. If anyone ventured to criticise the preparatory schools for their neglect of composition, they invariably replied that written expression was adequately taught through translation from the Greek and Latin. In addition, there was a widespread belief that composition ability is innate, that everyone should be able, without instruction, to write correctly the language he has been speaking from childhood. And finally, there was no recognized method of teaching composition. In a curriculum where the pre-

vailing method was the memoriter one, composition could scarcely hope to find a place.

III. When did English composition become a recognized part of the curriculum? What influences led to its inclusion in the course of study?

The last decade of the nineteenth century marks the establishment of composition as a recognized part of the curriculum. At that time it lost its incidental character and became an essential part of the regular English work. The final triumph of composition came as a result of a movement within the school system as well as of pressure brought to bear by the colleges. New York State, which as early as 1818 had stipulated the inclusion of composition as a condition for sharing the state literary fund, assumed a position of leadership when, in 1877, composition was made a prerequisite for graduation from the three-year general course. In 1890, composition which had previously been associated with rhetoric, was listed by itself as a regents' subject. A more general reform is indicated by the report of the English Conference of the Committee of Ten in 1894, which made English, including composition, as important a part of the curriculum as mathematics and the classical languages. Equally important, however, is the influence of the colleges, for to the close of the

nineteenth century, secondary schools were largely dominated by the colleges. The Harvard reports of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric by revealing the composition deficiencies of entering students had a salutary effect not only on those schools which prepared for entrance to Harvard, but, because of the wide publicity given the reports, on secondary schools in general. Although individual colleges had set up requirements in composition as early as 1870, their influence did not make itself powerfully felt until groups of colleges came together to determine uniform entrance requirements. The most important of these meetings was the joint conference of representatives of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, the Commission of Colleges of New England, and the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of New England held in 1894. Endorsing in general the recommendations of the Committee of Ten, the joint conference prescribed an examination in two parts, which would give attention to both literature and composition. Although the college entrance requirements had some bad effects on the teaching of composition in the high school, in general they helped the cause of composition by the

emphasis placed on its teaching.

IV. What were the methods used in teaching English composition from 1750 to 1900?

For many years the dominant aim of composition instruction in the secondary school was not to teach the child the art of written communication so much as to develop the powers of the mind. To that end he wrestled with subjects which were far beyond his comprehension; and to make the task even more difficult, he had to develop his essay according to a very formal plan borrowed from the Latin. The objective in the teaching of composition was the same as that in the teaching of mathematics and the classical languages -- mental discipline. About 1880 this aim underwent a slight modification. No longer was composition considered merely as a means of developing mental power, but received recognition as a form of communication, the major goal of which was accuracy. Content was sacrificed to the mechanics of writing, and exercises in the correction of false syntax became popular. The colleges urged and many schools attempted daily practice in writing in order to develop accuracy.

If the student had received composition instruction in the elementary school, his task in the

secondary schools would not have been so formidable. But his only preparation was memorization of the principles of grammar and rhetoric, a knowledge of which was believed to insure proficiency in written expression. About 1830, when Pestalozzian ideas were introduced into this country, composition found its way into the elementary school. Textbooks designed particularly for beginners appeared. Practice was now recognized as a preliminary to the study of principles. Reforms also followed in methods. Although difficult subjects still found a place, efforts were made to arouse the interest of pupils. Preliminary discussions modeled upon the Pestalozzian object lessons assisted the student in the preparation of his composition. Gradually the idea grew that children must have practice if they are to learn to write, and by the end of the nineteenth century it was firmly established.

Before composition instruction as such came into the curriculum, translation from the classical languages was considered ample preparation for writing the mother tongue. So firmly established was that idea that even down to the close of the nineteenth century many schools omitted composition instruction for

college preparatory students. Harvard college, however, in the last decade of the century revealed the inadequacies of that system.

Examination of textbooks in use before 1900 reveals the association of composition with other phases of English instruction. Until about 1850, composition was a handmaiden of grammar, serving as a means of inculcating rules of grammar. The earliest textbooks provided one-sentence exercises, but the later ones made provision for long compositions. Beginning about 1850, composition was taught in connection with rhetoric. Brief exercises providing practice in the rhetorical principles studied gave way to full length compositions. Finally, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, composition and literature were closely correlated.

Of the many devices used to stimulate interest in composition, the rhetorical was the most frequently used. It was supplemented by annual exhibitions, prizes, literary societies, and school papers.

It is evident that a century and a half of endeavor (1750 to 1900) failed to evolve a clear-cut method of teaching English composition. One reason for

the failure is that for most of that period English composition was striving hard to find a place in the curriculum. With the definite establishment of composition during the last decade of the nineteenth century, educators, instead of spending their energies vindicating composition teaching, could begin experimenting. A new era in the history of composition teaching had commenced.

Appendix A

Specimens of "Translation English"

The following specimens of "translation English" are from the examination papers of candidates for admission to the freshman class of Harvard College, June, 1891.

Latin

From Cicero's speech for Cornelius Balbus

"Therefore, for these reasons he was given over from the state by Cnaeus Pompey. The accuser does not deny this, but blames it. Thus they wish the fortunes of a perfectly innocent man, and the deed of a most excellent general to be condemned. Therefore the life of Cornelius, the deed of Pompey is brought (called) to trial. You grant that this man was born of a very honorable family in that state in which he was born, and from his youth up laying aside everything else, he spent his time in our wars, and with our commanders, and was absent from no task, no siege, and no battle. All these things are not only full of praise but also the peculiar traits of Cornelius, nor is there any blame in these things. Whence therefore is the charge? Because Pompey gave him over from the state. A charge against this man? Surely least of all, unless honor is to be considered a disgrace. Against whom therefore? In actual fact against no one, but in the argument of the accuser against him alone who did the giving. If he led on by influence had gained over by reward a less worthy man, nay even if a good man, but not so deserving: if, finally he said that something had been done not contrary to what was allowed, but contrary to what was fitting, nevertheless all blame of this kind, ought to be rejected by you, O judges. Now indeed, what is being said? What does the accuser say? That Pompey has done what was not allowed

him? This is more weighty than if he said that that had been done by him which was not fitting. For there are some things which are not fitting, even if they are allowed. But whatever is not allowed, certainly is not fitting."¹

Greek
From the Iliad of Homer

"Moreover Achilles lamented the father and then again Patroklos, and the lamenting of them went (arose) throughout the house. Moreover when godlike Achilles had satisfied himself with weeping, to him from his hair came sweat and from his limbs and immediately he rose from his seat and took the old man by the hand gray beard and gray head and ... and addressing him he spoke winged words: "O wretched one indeed you have many bad things in your heart. How did you endure alone to go to the ships of the Achaeans in the eyes of a man who killed for you many and noble sons? There is a heart of iron to you. But come sit down on your chair and let us allow sorrows to lie firmly in our hearts although grieving. for not any deed is of chill weeping for thus the gods allot to wretched mortals to live sorrowing, but they themselves are without care."²

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1. See Harvard College, Rept. of the Com. on Comp. and Rhet., [1892], 159.
 2. Ibid., 163.

Appendix B

Recommendations of the Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English, 1894¹

General recommendations

1. That the time allowed for the English examination for entrance to college be not less than two hours.
2. That the books prescribed be divided into two groups -- one for reading, the other for more careful study.
3. That in connection with the reading and study of the required books parallel or subsidiary reading be encouraged.
4. That a considerable amount of English poetry be committed to memory in preparatory study.
5. That the essentials of English grammar, even if there is no examination in that subject, be not neglected in preparatory study.

Though the conference believes that the correction of bad English is useful in preparatory study, it does not favor an examination in this subject as a requirement for admission to college

Entrance requirements

Note -- No candidate will be accepted in English whose work is notably defective in point of spelling, punctuation, idiom or division into paragraphs.

1. Reading. A certain number of books will be set for reading. The candidate will be required to present evidence of a general knowledge of the subject-matter, and to answer simple questions on the lives of the authors. The form of examination will usually be the writing of a paragraph or two on each of several topics, to be chosen by the candidate from a considerable number--

1. Univ. of the St. of N. Y., High School Department,
Sixth Annual Report (1898), 843-44.

perhaps 10 or 15 -- set before him in the examination paper. The treatment of these topics is designed to test the candidate's power of clear and accurate expression, and will call for only a general knowledge of the substance of the books. In place of a part or the whole of this test, the candidate may present an exercise book, properly certified by his instructor, containing compositions or other written work done in connection with the reading of the books.

[Then follows the list of books
prescribed for 1895-1898.]

2. Study and practice. This part of the examination presupposes the thorough study of each of the works named below. The examination will be upon subject-matter, form, and structure.

[The reading list follows. The
final section, "Requirements for
an advanced examination" is con-
cerned only with literature.]

Appendix C

Specimen Examination Papers in English
(Harvard)¹

1874.

A short English composition is required, correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and expression. Thirty lines will be sufficient. Make at least two paragraphs.

Subject: the story of the Caskets, in the "Merchant of Venice";
or, the story of Shakespere's "Tempest";
or, the story of Rebecca, in Scott's "Ivanhoe."

1875

Each candidate is required to write a short English composition, correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and expression. This composition must be at least fifty lines long, and be properly divided into paragraphs. One of the following subjects must be taken: --

The Character of Dr. Primrose.
An Account of the Tent-scene between Brutus and Cassius.
The Argument of Marmion.

1881

Write a short composition upon one of the subjects given below.

Before beginning to write, consider what you have to say on the subject selected, and arrange your thoughts in logical order.

Aim at quality rather than quantity of work.

Carefully revise your composition, correcting all errors in punctuation, grammar, division by paragraphs, and expression, and making each sentence as clear and

1. From Ann. Repts. of the Pres. and Treas. of Harv. Col. (1886-87), App., 161.

forcible as possible. If time permits, make a clean copy of the revised work.

- I. The Story of "Hamlet."
- II. Hamlet and the Ghost.
- III. The Character of Polonius.
- IV. The Fate of Ophelia.
- V. Hamlet's Speech to the Players.
- VI. The Fight between Laertes and Hamlet.
- VII. The Character of Hamlet's Mother.
- VIII. Hamlet as a Gentleman.

1887

Write a composition -- with special attention to clearness of arrangement, accuracy of expression, and quality rather than quantity of matter -- on one of the following subjects: --

1. An outline of the Story of Quentin Durward.
2. The Escape of Isabelle of Croye from the Castle Hall of Schonwaldt.
3. How Quentin Durward Outwitted the Bohemian Hayraddin.
4. The Character of King Louis XI. as represented by Scott.
5. The Meeting of Louis XI. and the Duke of Burgundy, at Peronne.
6. A Glimpse of William de la Marck, the Boar of Ardennes.

Specimens of Bad English¹

Correct on this paper all the errors you discover in the following sentences: --

1. Being commissioned to relieve the beleaguered city, she sat out at the head of a force whose numbers were swelled by accessions all along the march.

2. It is not too much to say that he is known most and best by a single story; one which we read in childhood and seem never to quite forget.

1. Ibid., 162.

3. It is most efficacious when taken fasting and mixed with an equal quantity of hot water.

4. De la Marck, in short, saw he would not be supported, even by his own band, in any farther act of immediate violence.

5. Tom stared at me, and I wished I was at home.

6. Mr. Hastings did not reveal this to Mr. Marley, who, by the way, had fallen in love with Miss Hardcastle, whom he thought was the barmaid.

7. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him; when blasted in fortune, and disgrace and danger darkened around his name she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings.

8. In seeing Miss Anderson's Juliet I think I have seen the part as well acted as I am likely to.

9. There was a grand baloon ascension which landed in West Wareham.

10. Last Saturday evening we celebrated the first annual existance of our paper amid the enthusiasm of hundreds of people.

11. Probably there was never known such a gathering in town since its foundation, and the result of an establishment of a newspaper in town with such a wide-spread circulation shows fairly what and who pursues its columns.

12. He was one whom nature seemed to have first made generously and then to have added music as a dominant power.

13. A feeling of sympathy for his fellow man, although in bondage, has at last induced the faculty to put into execution the long-dreamt of idea of laying board-walks throughout the college yard.

14. Some of this wax Ulysses gave to each sailor to put in his ears and prevent him hearing the Sirens.

15. One finds in the reviews of to-day, articles ranging from a sermon to a story and of course many excellent ones, but the efficacy of these latter are destroyed by the stiff, unfamiliar style in which they are written and which usually does away with whatever interest we may take in the subject.

16. We wish to congratulate '87 on her well-earned success, as by winning this race she placed the victor's wreath on her head which will be remembered long after the members of the present seniors are scattered in the four corners of the world.

17. Soliciting your inquirey either in person or letter before you shall locate your home at this Island in the Ocean.

I am, Most Respectfully,

X. Y.

1896¹

Attend to form as well as to substance.

1. Select any five of the following subjects and write a paragraph or two on each:

- a. New Year's eve at the red house.
- b. Silas Marner's gold.
- c. Silas Marner and the church at Lantern Yard.
- d. Godfrey Cass and his brother.
- e. The coming of Eppie.
- f. The draining of the stone-pits.
- g. Godfrey Cass' confession to his wife.
- h. The character of Silas Marner.
- i. A comparison of the sisters Nancy and Priscilla Lammeter.
- j. The inhabitants of Raveloe.
- k. Eppie's wedding.
- l. The escape of Charles 2 from Woodstock.
- m. Cromwell before the picture of Charles 1.
- n. Evangeline in the south.
- o. The death of Gabriel.

2, a. Tell the story of the Merchant of Venice, showing how many and what stories are interwoven in it.

b. State clearly the argument of Shylock and that of Portia in the trial scene.

c. Quote, if you can, any 10 lines of the play which you especially like. If you are unable to quote 10 lines, give the substance of Bassanio's speech as he makes the choice of the caskets.

d. Give your opinion of the treatment Shylock receives throughout the play.

e. Under what circumstances is the 'music of the spheres' mentioned in the play? What is said about it?

1. Jones, Richard, op. cit., 614.

Appendix D

Cornell University Entrance Examinations¹

1890

English

I

Make a neat copy of the following, correcting whatever may be faulty in spelling or punctuation:

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the misterious. The connexion of the male-coach with the state and the executive government gave to the whol male-establishment an official grandeur which did us servise on the roads and invested us with sesonible terrors. Not the less impressive were these terrors because these legal limmits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gaitis with what defferencial hurry with what an obiedient start they fly open at our approach. Look at that long line of carters ahed awdaciously usurping the very crest of the road. As soon as the dredful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach see with what frensy of trepedation they fly to their horses heads and depprecate our rath. Treason they feel to be their crime each individual carter feels himself under the bann of confiscation and attainder. The douts which we razed as to our powers did more to rap them in terror by rapping them in uncertainty than could have been efected by the sharpest defenitions of the law from the Quarter Sessions. We on our parts (we the collec-tive male I mean) did our utmost to exalt the idea of our priveledges by the insolense with which we wealded them. Wether this insolense rested upon law that

1. Cornell University, Question Papers Used at the Examination for Admission and at the Examination for University Scholarships, 1890, 1894.

gave it a sancion or upon conscious power that hautilly despenced with that sancion; equally it spoke from a potencial station and the agent in each particular insolense of the moment was viewd reverensially as one having awthority.

II

Write a composition of not less than 500 words on any one of the following subjects:

a.

1. The personal character of Goldsmith.
2. The hardships of Goldsmith's early life in London.
3. Prominent literary merits of the Vicar of Wakefield.
4. The old and the New Schoolmaster (Elia).
5. Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.
6. Popular Fallacies.

b.

1. Narrate the story of Evangeline down to the departure from Acadia.
2. Describe the conspiracy against Caesar.
3. The Robbery of Silas Marner.
4. The scene at the Rainbow Inn following Silas Marner's appearance.
5. Miss Pyncheon's shopkeeping.
6. The escape of Quentin Durward and Isabelle from the Castle.

1894

Questions.

Time, one hour.

(100 words to each question.)

1. The Quarrel between Cassius and Brutus.
 2. Bassanio's Choice of Casket.
 3. Sending of the Fiery Cross.
 4. Description of Westminster Abbey.
- (Answer any two of the above questions. Do not use Historical Present.)

Essays.

Time, two hours.

Three essays in all, each one not less than 200 words. Select from the following list of subjects. But do not write more than one essay upon any one book. Do not use Historical Present.

5. Fox's alliance with Bute. One paragraph to each of these two heads:
 - a. Personal character of Fox.
 - b. Character of his management of public affairs.
6. Relations of England and America. One paragraph to each of these two heads:
 - a. Character of Rockingham, and of Burke.
 - b. Repeal of the Stamp Act.
7. Relate the events witnessed by Roaldn and his grandmother in the Abbey of Kennaquhair, at the installation of Father Ambrose as Abbot. Two paragraphs.
8. Queen Mary's escape. One paragraph to each of these heads:
 - a. Roland making the false keys.
 - b. The escape itself.
9. The drowning of Ham and Steerforth. Two paragraphs.
10. Character of Miss Betsey Trotwood, of Mr. Dick. One paragraph to each.

Appendix E

Three Compositions of About 1770

The following compositions "illustrate the state of bewilderment in which children's minds are placed when called on to write without any help or guidance on some abstract or general subject. They were written not a hundred miles from a Massachusetts school" about the year 1770.¹

American Scenery

We can see a great deal of this when we travel into different parts of the country and view the various scenes of antiquity.

It is delightful to travel into it, and see it, those who have money enough, but poor people must do otherwise.

There are a great many kinds of scenery, some of ghost, some imagination, and some of real life, so that we have all sorts and all kinds. We imagine one when there really is not one, and it may appear to be very beautiful to us at times, and at others not so.

"The comparative degree of a Mariner's Compass and the Art of Printing!"

The Mariner's Compass.

This instrument governs a vessel at sea, and guides the mariner through the voyage. It always points north, and the vessel goes in any direction by the means

1. See Atkinson, W.P., "Composition", The Mass. Teacher, XIX (June, 1866), 190-5.

of a rudder, which turns it from one course to another. When a vessel is lost at sea, it is very soon known, and a great excitement made at land about it, and people think it strange. One will say it is fire, or it got ship-wrecked and there is no knowing anything about it, till a vessel arrives and brings news that they discovered it at such a place. It then brings joy and gladness to every heart that is interested in it.

The Art of Printing.

Men would be totally ignorant of it, were it not for this art. The great men of modern times once began by the stamp of the type which had the letter A upon it. They commenced with that and went on by degrees, and, in time, became very intelligent men and became enlightened.

If a vessel is lost at sea, it is made by the types making an impression on the papers and is copied from one paper into another.

How Paper is Made.

First, pedlers go roun and gether rags, and gives tin ware and wooden ware and sutch. They then go and sell it to people that owns mills made on purpose for making paper. then they do have a lot of womans hierd to cut up the rags and they cut them a bout 2 inches long and a bout one in widh they put them in a large bilar and biles them and does something else with them. linen rags makes best paper, white rags makes white paper and they youse rie-straw to make brown paper, they youst to have a paper mill as we go down on the plains a bout six years ago.

Appendix F

A Simple, Didactic Theme

The following model from William Russell's A Grammar of Composition (pp. 137-139) shows the treatment of a simple, didactic theme.

Peace.

1. Definition.* Peace is the ultimate wish of all men.

2. Cause. For, in whatever manner we desire to exercise our faculties, in the acquiring of knowledge, riches, or honors, we all look forward to a state of peace and tranquillity, in which alone we think that we can enjoy them. In this happy state it is, that the merchant expects to enjoy his riches, the soldier to be secure from toils and dangers, and the statesman to lay aside his anxious cares.

3. History. So agreeable to the mind of man is a state of peace and tranquillity, that all the poets of antiquity imagined such a state to have existed in the ages immediately subsequent to the creation of man, and to have continued till human depravity gave rise to discord and strife. The Divine Being has shown us, that he himself regards peace as one of the greatest benefits that can be conferred on man. Peace on earth was the benediction announced by the angels on the birth of the Saviour; and, at this birth, under the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus, the whole world was in a state of peace.

4. Extent. In every well-ordered community, peace is the aim and the enjoyment of all ranks; and it is only the prevalence of selfish feelings, false views of honor, and corrupt passions, which prevents its being enjoyed by all the nations of the earth.

* This term is here employed in an arbitrary sense.

5. Effects. Peace gives the human faculties liberty to expand themselves; and it has been generally styled the Nurse of Arts; for, when a nation is at peace, there are room, and leisure, and taste for improvements of every kind.

But however desirable peace may be, it is found, when not accompanied by virtue, to be productive of almost as many evils as war itself. The riches acquired in peace, are apt to give a taste for luxury and prodigality; and these excesses generally lead to profligacy. The quiet and ease which men enjoy in a state of peace, have a tendency to make them careless and irreligious; and these dispositions open the way to every other vice. It is in a state of peace that those feelings are cherished, which generate war: security begets self-sufficiency, insolence; and insolence, quarrels. Thus peace, the most desirable thing on earth, may, by the depravity of those who are not virtuous enough to bear it, become productive of the most dreadful scourge of human nature, -- a state of war.

Appendix G

A Contemporary Account of Composition

Instruction about 1840

A teacher describes the experience that he, as a boy, had with composition in an academy about 1840:¹

From the exercises of the first composition day I was excused, but was requested to pay strict attention, that I might in future do likewise. I was quite familiar with Murray's series of Readers, and I must confess that I could hardly distinguish between the exercises of some of the compositions I heard, and those of Blair, Addison, Johnson, etc. Many of them sounded wonderfully correct, and I have no doubt, to this day, that they were; for in them I traced striking resemblances to the aforesaid authors. Others again were not so classical, for one young lady read Irving's Grave, as completely as she could copy it from the book. Others again were to me perfect enigmas, and beyond my comprehension.

I know not the effect they produced on others, but they had an awful effect on me, for I knew that on the next time I would have to rise and read, in as nearly the same way as I could; for the teacher ... greatly prided himself on the reputation of his school for compositions.

I sweat great drops even in anticipation, but when he gave out the subjects, and "the importance of well-spent youth" was given to me as the subject for my first unaided composition, my miseries seemed to me greater than I could bear. How I tried and tried to write, and how the more I tried the less progress I made, can not be written on paper. I at last appealed to my room-mate for advice; he only laughed at my troubles, and told me to take my composition from books or newspapers, as the greater part of the rest did. He showed me how he patched up many of his, by taking a paragraph here and there, where he could make it hit his subject.

1. See The Conn. Com. Sch. Jour., XVI (May, 1861), 151-156.

He also showed me a great pile of the speeches of congressmen, from which he stole, whenever he was allowed to choose his own subject. He further declared, that as very few read these speeches, he ran no risk of being caught. My desire to obey my teacher, and to appear well before my fellow pupils, overcame my sense of the wrong I did, and I am sorry to say, that my compositions troubled me only in my conscience, for the remainder of that session.

A dry, abstract subject was generally given by the teacher, and he seemed to be satisfied if he got his three pages of letter paper, for correction. Once, during the year, I saw a boy corrected for copying a piece verbatim from the old English Reader.

Appendix H

Essays from the Journal of Caroline Chester,
Student at the Litchfield School.

May 20, 1816.

"What would we pay what ransom give
For one short moment more to live,
One hour to spend in thoughtful care
In duty penitence & prayer."

Upon the Right Improvement of Time.

Time is a most invaluable blessing given us to prepare for eternity, and to improve it aright ought to be the great concern of our life. The space of time allotted us for to spend on this earth is so short that were we to employ every moment to prepare for the great and awful change which awaits us, it would be no more than sufficient, but how many hours and even days do we waste in idle conversation, frivolous reading and an unnecessary attention to dress not remembering that for all these things God will bring us into judgment." If we would only remember, That time once lost never returns the moments which are past are past for ever" we should surely be more diligent [sic] to improve it aright for it is incumbent on us to do that that when it is past we may have the pleasure of reflecting that it has not been misemployed. A just sense of the importance of time is very essential to the right management of it. I know of a young lady who rises before sun-rise and devotes every hour of the day to some particular study or employment when she rises she knows if her life is preserved what she shall do each hour of the day, she agrees with the Poet who says "Order is heavens first law" -- It is our duty to remember that the fifty years of man must make provision for the last" and not postpone religion till old age for soon the night of death will arrive when no man can work."¹

1. See Vanderpoel, More Chronicles of a Pioneer School, 166.

Saturday, July 27, 1816.

On Prejudice

Prejudice is defined (by Mr. Walker) prepossession, hurt, injury, it is the effect of preconceived ideas or impressions acting on the mind and blinding every view opposed to those impressions. A person who is prejudiced cannot but judge partially he sees with wrong eyes, he hears with wrong ears and judges with wrong feelings, he is so much biassed by self love that he would be willing to condemn the person against whom he is prejudiced without hearing his discourse -- Prejudice cannot with propriety be called the error of weak minds since many persons of strong intellectual powers are often swayed by it; though doubtless there are some who will not let their feelings lead them to deviate from the right paths -- Prejudice is but another name for Party Spirit and has proved the greatest foe to national greatness and glory; its blighting influence has even reached the social circle and chilled many a heart open to affection and truth, for prejudice is ever opposed to truth and too strongly biassed to allow of free enquiry. We often let the "eye of our mind" prejudice use against others if the countenances are not prepossessing but this is wrong as we can scarcely ever judge of persons by their faces and we frequently read in History of persons who were very beautiful & yet possessed cruel capricious & tyrannical dispositions, & we ourselves have seen those who at first sight have by their beauty prejudiced us in their favour but upon acquaintance we have found to possess very bad dispositions, we have also known others whom we were prejudiced against but when we had been in their company a short time we found to possess a most excellent understanding and disposition these examples clearly prove that we very often judge erroneously & therefore ought not to form hasty opinions...

Of the terms Prejudice, Bigotry, Candor and Liberality, Dr. Aikins in letters to his son give a happy exemplification -- "When Jesus preached Prejudice cried "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth! Crucify crucify him exclaimed Rigotry, Why what evil hath he done remonstrated Candor & Liberality, drew from his words this inference "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."¹

1. Ibid., 180✓

Appendix I

An Illustration of a Discussion of Objects
as a Preliminary to Composition

After the introduction of Pestalozzian ideas, the discussion of objects was recommended as a preliminary to written expression. The following lesson is an extract from a paper read by Mr. L.W. Russell of Watertown at the Schoolmasters' Meeting:

"Scholars, you may take pencils and paper, and write as many notes as you can while I question you and give some facts about the subject for this week's written exercise. How many have ever seen a pine-tree?" All hands are up: but one says, "What kind of pine do you mean, sir?" "I mean a white pine; but how many kinds of pine are there?" Several different names are given which are shown to be only local names of the three kinds found in this region, the white, the Norway, and the pitch.

"Please tell me how this tree looks." A variety of answers are given; as, it is tall, straight; the bark is rough; the bark is smooth, etc. "Do you think that the bark is smooth on old trees?" -- "No. It is smooth on young trees, but rough on old ones." -- "Right. Note down as many of these things as you can as we proceed. Can any one tell how high the tallest of the pines grow?" Various answers are given. Where the pupils are at fault, facts should be given and the truth made known. "How many have seen the Bunker Hill Monument? Do you suppose that pines ever grow as high as that?" Nearly all think not. They are told of the height of some even higher. A tree taller than Bunker Hill Monument! They are beginning to be interested in the pine. "How do the branches grow from the tree?" One says thick; another, in rings; another in a spiral; still others, out straight, flat, etc. The manner in which they grow is shown, and the proper terms of description decided upon. "How many have seen a pine that has been blown down by the wind?"

How did the roots look? Did they appear to have penetrated deeply into the ground? Do the roots decay rapidly? Why not?" One boy says, "I know; they are all full of fat, and we split them up to get torches so we can see to spear fish in the night." "Very well. But is 'fat' the right name for the substance that burns with so brilliant a light?"

"Now what will you say of the appearance of the tree as a whole?" Different answers bring out the words, grand, splendid, sublime, noble, majestic, and others. Here, without entering into a tedious discussion of the meanings of words, the proper terms of description must be selected. "Shall we then call the Pine the King of the forest?" "No, sir. The Oak is the king; we will call the Pine the Queen of the forest." "Very well; we will marry them then, The Oak and Pine, King and Queen. Express that in your written exercise as prettily as you can."

Example

"This is the tallest tree that is found in the eastern forests. It sometimes grows to the height of two hundred feet in New England. One was recently cut in Eastern New York, two hundred and forty feet high, and one which grew in Lancaster, N. H., was two hundred and sixty-four feet high, forty-two feet higher than Bunker Hill Monument. The bark is rough on old trees, but smooth on young ones. The pine is very straight and erect, and tapers very gradually to the top. For this reason it is much used for ship's masts, flag-staffs, etc. The branches grow in whorls from the trunk, and at right angles with it, one whorl coming out each year. By this means the age of a young tree may be told, and, also, how much it grows in a year.

"If the Oak on account of its majestic and sturdy appearance deserves the name of King of the forest, so the Pine for its light, graceful, airy appearance, merits the title of Queen.

"The roots are found near the surface of the ground, and for this reason it is easily blown over, when left alone. The roots do not readily decay. This is on account of their being filled with resin."¹

1. See The Mass. Teacher, XIX (June, 1868), 193-95.

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