

child, and will perhaps be the one he will ask for when the snows of many winters have gathered about his brow. Why are these things true? They are true because the depths of man's nature have been touched, because the innate sense of beauty and harmony has been roused to activity by the proper stimulus. Even so with reading matter! A pupil of Grade II will listen with rapt attention to the story of Horatius and the mature man will find it still stir his pulse; the pupil of Grade VIII will delight in "The Burial March of Dundee," and twenty years later will respond to its inspiring music.

(To be continued)

COMPOSITION.

Composition is the premeditated expression of thought. It should not be necessary to add "by means of language" but curiously enough, a fashion has crept in of regarding music, gesture, painting, sculpture as modes of expressing thought. The sole function of these, however, is to excite emotion or to call up mental images. They cannot make assertions. Nor indeed, should all language work be styled composition. That which is oral hardly deserves the distinction, wanting as it is in the necessary form. There is, in fact, a certain degree of antagonism between the cultivation of fluency in speech and the cultivation of excellence in composition. Training in speaking produces the very prolixity that is so ruinous to success in writing. Training in writing, on the other hand, produces the very fastidiousness that is so fatal to readiness in speaking. The former, it may be said, leads to utterance without thought, the latter to thought without utterance. Accordingly your orator at the end of a pen and your essayist on the boards of a platform usually cut figures that are equally sorry; and for a similar reason the schools of America produce men who can make after-dinner speeches, whereas the schools of England produce men who can write books. All this is merely to show that oral expression should not be allowed to supersede as well as precede written expression. Not that it would be well on the other hand to sacrifice our oral language lessons to the attainment of finished quality of composition. In a country where institutions are representative, and where there is so much social intercourse, it is far better to have the power of speaking and conversing readily than to be able to write an editorial, a magazine article, or a book. Even letter-writing—business or familiar—does not play so important a part in life as the art of talking with a fair amount of fluency.

The study of rhetoric is presumably prescribed for the purpose of reducing composition to a thing of rule. Composition, it is very certain, was never made better by any such means. Here the deductive method is seen at its very worst, for compositions are not propositions, nor can words be fitted to thought by a process of reasoning. The rules of rhetoric, in fact, should never be thought of during the act of writing; but everything should be done by unconscious imitation of good models. And in the unconsciousness of the imitation consists its chief value.

Much might indeed be said as to the inadvisability of trying to hold some forms of knowledge other than implicitly. This is particularly true in questions of language. Anyone who uses "shall" and "will" correctly and unhesitatingly as a matter of early association, had better be very careful not to learn any-