

will, I think, acknowledge the truth of my second proposition. Though a man be as wise as Solomon, yet if he have not acquired the faculty of expressing his ideas, orally or in writing in a pleasing and forcible manner, how shall his wisdom advantage himself or ennoble mankind? You will say that a wise man cannot speak without doing honour to himself and good to his hearers, but a fool will always betray himself by his speech. Yet even a fool may *learn* to clothe and present his ideas in such a manner as to escape ridicule, and the wise man's "jewels five words long that on the stretched fore-finger of all time sparkle forever" will lose none of their brilliancy from a better setting. [It is as important in the small, as in the great, affairs of life.] This is as true of speech as of writing, for oratory and composition are but oral and written phases of the same thing and cannot be separated. It is related of Tennyson, that, at a banquet, he once sat opposite a silent stranger—a man of massive brow, keen eye, and intellectual look. "Ah!" thought Tennyson, "there is a man of noble mind; why, why, is he so provokingly silent? why does he not speak? I am sure from his lips would fall words of wisdom." The stranger, at this moment, forgetting the maxim, "still tongue—wise head," called out to the waiter: "Pass me them turmits." Poor Tennyson was disenchanted—the stranger had never learned oral composition. What confidence would a business man be likely to place in the seeker for a position of trust, whose written application, to say nothing of misspelled words, was a mass of misplaced capitals scattered here and there among awkward and ungrammatical sentences? Have you never judged the mental calibre of your correspondent from his letter? Richard, the enamoured, in a late society novel, speaking of a lady who had

never learned oral or written composition, but with whose personal charms he had been smitten, whose conversation had startled him, and whose badly-composed letter, then in his hand, had surprised him, says: "When I saw her face I was enchanted, when I heard her speak I was astounded, when I read her letter I was disgusted." [It must be taught from the alphabet upwards.] That the art of expressing one's ideas accurately, neatly, and forcibly, does not receive, in a majority of our schools, that attention which its importance demands, I need not argue—we all admit it. How is the evil to be remedied? Is the subject one like Algebra, to be taken up at a certain stage of the pupil's progress, and not till then? Decidedly not. I do not mean that the set rules of composition are to be taught in the first instance, or, indeed, ever to be taken up as dry principles. We cram too much theoretical grammar and teach too little practical composition. The teacher of the primary class must teach composition by the manner in which she asks her questions and the matter in which she receives her answers. Oral composition *only* can be taught to junior classes, and it is of equal importance with written, to more advanced classes. Pupils should be taught *both* methods, so that, in future life, they may write the simplest business letter without exposing their ignorance, and "open their mouth without putting their foot in it." While questions should be so framed as to elicit the pupil's knowledge of the subject, it is of still greater importance that they should draw forth and develop his thinking powers, and, more than all, direct his thoughts into their proper modes of expression. That subject, in our daily routine of school duties, that does not cause our pupils to *think* and to express their thoughts neatly and accurately wastes their time. How few of us in our hurry