

an average, we would have above one million of persons habitual readers of newspaper politics in 1860. Within the current twenty years, I fancy the proportion must have immensely increased, with the wider diffusion of English education, and the increased cheapness, enterprise and excellence of our present periodical publications. In that respect certainly England has not degenerated. Her periodical literature is at this day, the highest both as to skill, learning, and moral purpose of any the world has yet seen. On this side of the Atlantic, we are for the most part echoes of the English press; and better service we could not render our contemporaries than faithful imitation of the best as yet, unless we were fortunate enough to invent a higher and a better.

If the first century of which I have spoken—from Elizabeth to Charles II.—might be called the century of early English drama, the hundred years of which we are now seeing the '68th, will probably be called hereafter the "newspaper century." There has been a fabled age of gold and iron; but within the compass of our language, the present is entitled to be called, the age of paper. The difficulty is not now so much to tell what the newspaper contains, as what it does not contain; to tell in what affairs it interposes, as to point out any which it overlooks or omits. The pulpit, the senate, the courts of law, the Bourse, the theatre, are all Provinces in this new Dominion. You find last night's fire in one column, and the civil war in China in the next. Here a review of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget speech, and there a critique on Verdi's last Opera. In one column, we find chronicled the movements of a dethroned Prince, in another the particular marks of a lost Poodle; sometimes equal prominence is given to a set-to in the P. R. and a contest for the Premiership or the Presidency. There is nothing too high or too low for this,

"—map of busy life—  
Its fluctuations and its vast concerns."

Sometimes trespassing the bounds of a wise discretion Editors will break into the sanctuary of private life, and violate its privileges; in such cases converting the press which ought to be the guardian of society, into its most dangerous enemy: a character in which it is every good man's bounden duty to resist, oppose, and punish, such a perverted press. Those who commit such outrages by such a means, are doubly deserving of punishment; once for the grievous wrong done, and again for having prostituted so noble an instrument as the free press, to so base a purpose. The English periodical press of which I have chiefly taken account, in what I have said, has had during this century of its greatest triumphs, its bitter battles to fight against the political power. In the first quarter of the century, there were few years without from ten to twenty, and sometimes even thirty prosecutions, for "seditious libel in the London courts." These prosecutions gave occasion for the noble arguments of Erskine and Curran, Mackintosh, and Brougham, at the bar; and of Fox, and Sheridan in the House of Commons, in defence of the liberty of the press. In one of his brilliant addresses, on this favorite subject, Sheridan stated to Parliament, that there were, at that moment, in the reporter's gallery, not less than 23 graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, and Edinburgh, working their way upward, in the meantime to honorable professions: and there is reason to believe that the proportion of College men has not diminished, on the London journals, of our own day. The mention of stenography reminds me, of how many arts and acquirements, now go to make up a great newspaper. Besides the varied education and experience of the editors and foreign correspondents a daily paper now is the product of metallurgy, mechanics, steam, and telegraphy, as well as of stenography and ready writing. Into the difficult questions of the fairness of anonymous writing, or the reverse, I do not propose to enter; preferring to pass it by, in this place, with the dictum of my favorite oracle in Don Quixote, "that much might be said on both sides of that question." This newspaper revolution, however, has taken place, and will not be turned backwards. We are, whether we will or not, a newspaper generation, born and bred. It is impossible to overrate the social importance of the newspaper. As Burke once observed (I quote from memory), "it is part of the reading of all, and the whole of the reading of many." It brings the ends of the earth daily, to our firesides and our breakfast tables. The poles are no longer "wide asunder," nor are the Antipodes distant, since Ariel has named editor.—"The deserts wile and antres vast" of Abyssinia, and Central Asia, are not beyond the reach of this hundred-armed and hundred-eyed monster of activity and intelligence. And in the art of distributing, the press is quite as wonderful as in the art of acquiring information. "What is it," asks De Tocqueville, "drops the same thought at the same moment into ten thousand minds?" and he answers, "the Newspaper." I remember a curious estimate made some years ago in New York, was, that if all the copies of a

well known morning paper, issued daily, were spread out quilt-wise, they would cover twenty-seven acres: only fancy what a seed-sheet that was! Before closing, gentlemen, let me add the reflection, or rather the expression of a hope, that as this revolution brings us larger knowledge, it may, at the same time, imbue us with wider sympathies; that it may affect us, as to every good cause, in the same way his newspaper interested the reclusive poet Cowper, in the fortunes of the Navigator, Captain Cooke,

"I tread his leek,  
Ascend his topmast, though his peering eyes  
Discover countries, with a kindred heart,  
Suffer his woes and share in his escapes."

Let us hope that it will be among the abiding effects of this new social power, to make public life nobler, and private life purer; to strengthen the arm of just authority, and weaken, or extinguish religious rancor; to be to the weak a shield, and to the strong a curb-rein; in short to make men more manly and women more womanly, and so to hasten the advent of the promised, "good time coming."

## EDUCATION.

(Extracts from the American Educational Periodicals.)

### Teaching Rhetoric and Composition.

No man should be expected to perform impossibilities; ought it then to be required of the teacher? Yet, I often think that he who has to teach rhetoric and composition, is commonly in much this position. By this I mean, that two things are required of him at the same time, which are so unlike as to be inaccessible through the same path of effort; and in the pursuit of neither, are the instruments consistent or adequate.

The teacher of rhetoric is expected to establish his pupil in the systematic theory of the art. This requires the use of a textbook or its equivalent.

What, now, is the true province of the text book in rhetoric? simply to unfold to the pupil in a clear, compact, correct, elegant and systematic form, the field, the facts, and the philosophy of the art.

But what does the pupil want of all this? that he may have a rational idea of what he has to do in mastering the art of composition; and that as he proceeds in the acquisition of this latter art, he may be able to frame all his acquirements into a consistent whole. In other words, that he may intelligently set to work in the practice of composition, and may be able to comprehend what he has done and why he has done it. A proper text book in the theory of the art of rhetoric is to the student in composition, what the chart is to the practical navigator. Without it, he can neither determine intelligently the track he is to pursue, nor satisfactorily set forth, either to himself or others, the route he has actually followed; without it, his practical efforts will be purely experimental, unsystematic, *haphazard*; and the attained results will be uncertain, detached, *incoherent*.

But this is practically saying, what else? What to some will seem strange, perhaps, heretical. It is to say that it is not the office of the text book to train the pupil to apply the principles of rhetoric to actual composition. It is to say that while the theory of the art is a necessary guide and light, it is not the art itself, it does not and cannot give the pupil command of the actual art. The power to think, select, reject, arrange, express, adorn, and thoroughly finish in practical composition, it cannot give him. These no book, no teacher, even working mainly with the book, can give him. They lie out of and beyond all such fixed instrumentalities; they are locked up with the powers, workings and struggles of the pupil's own intellect. As in the case of the navigator, the trimming of his sails and the careening of his vessel, so that she shall rightly take the wind, and skilfully thread her way through the tortuous channel; the power to make her do this, is a something altogether beyond charts and sailing directions; lies in the man's own practically acquired seamanship.