

and associates qualities and actions with those names. He is thus collecting a large array of nouns and pronouns, and adjectives and verbs, for that practical composition in which he is every waking hour engaged. Before he can wield the pencil or the pen, then, he has entered on the path of composition. In well educated families children *hear* the best forms of expression and imitate them; while thoughtful parents who are sufficiently educated, will always be watchful to guide and correct the utterances of childhood. Here then, is the suggestion to the public school teacher. The youngest scholars cannot write, it is true. But the utterances, the answers to questions, should be carefully watched and guided. Every answer should be a full one, that is, it should form a sentence, however simple it may be; and the wording of the sentence, when wrong, should be corrected and made the subject of further expressions. Children rarely express their thoughts correctly—grammatical errors and mispronunciations incessantly crop up, and offer occasions for exercises in correct and elegant expression. Pestalozzi frequently exercised his youngest pupils in the pronunciation of hard and long words, and thus prepared the way for refined utterance; and the Hon. Mr. Horace Mann, in his reports of the schools of Prussia, says that *full* answers—that is to say, answers in complete sentences were always exacted from the pupils.

But all this is preparatory to the end in view, *written* composition. As soon then as a pupil is able to write, he may commence his exercises on the principles of an art. He knows the names of hundreds of objects around him, animate and inanimate. The teacher may or may not tell him that these names are called nouns; but the really important exercise is *to write them down*. He may write the names in order and classify them,—all the things in a school room, in his home, his church, his

village or city. He may then write the names of all the people and all the places he knows, and be made familiar with the use of capital letters. When he acquires facility in these first forms of expression, qualities and numbers, may follow. A pupil in the second book knows the color, or the size, or appearance, and often the numbers of objects around him, and to write these facts trains him to exact habits, and is another step in written composition. The third grand step in this elementary course is still pursued on the model of nature. Actions and existence are as familiar to the child as the man, and the former learns to say what a thing or an animal does or is, as soon as he learns its name. He calls the domestic favorite *a cat*, and he can say “the cat *mews*, or *sleeps* or *plays*.” He sees a new toy, or book, or dress; and he can say—the toy *is nice*, the dress *is new*, the book *is pretty*. Here then a method suggests itself to fashion his thoughts into sentences, as correct and as clear as those of a professional *litterateur*. Let the teacher name a number of subjects and tell the pupil to say (1) what each *is*, and (2) what each *does*;—and the eagerness with which the young composer enters upon his literary efforts will convince any looker on that children do not “abhor composition” But while grammatical terms may be safely kept out of view and use, grammatical methods should be strictly followed, and as far as possible the practice should be in harmony with the arrangements and definitions, that a systematic grammar will afterwards present. Hence the *kinds* and *inflections* of the verbs should guide the teacher in forming his exercises. The following order if not followed will be suggestive of the method:—I. A series of exercises with (1) transitive verbs, and (2) intransitive verbs; II. (1) Formation of sentences with transitive verbs in the active voice, and (2) their conversion into the passive voice. III. The use of the prin-