

mother at the age of six and began that training which distinguished him even among those whose profession was physical prowess. The value of early training is not unknown or unheeded in our day. The modern mother understands its value, and is not behind the Spartan in the fortitude she displays in giving up her daughter from early dawn to dewy eve, to that unremitting manual labor which ensures for this daughter the conventional accomplishment of the day, those small musical tinklings, the pride of the maternal ear, but the paternal torture and the sole end of existence till womanhood breaks. With the mind instances are rare, where neglect in early youth is atoned for by after exertions, for the will which yields so easily to habit is obstinate and disinclined to unwonted exertions in later years, and the mind lacking, and his spur soon tires. Imperfect or defective instruction is less hopeful of results than mere neglect; strength of purpose, along with natural intelligence, may bridge over the total lack of early discipline, but it is hard indeed to repair the damages of a spoilt mind. "Much pains are taken," says a master of English, "and time bestowed to teach us what to think, but little or none of either to instruct us how to think. The magazine of the memory is stored and stuffed betimes, but the conduct of the understanding is all along neglected." In the beginning the young brain wants the intelligent care and nurture of the intellectual mind—that wholesome exercise of all its faculties whence comes gradual strength, gradual capacity. Failing this, its effects, weak at best, are disabled and discouraged, interest is gone, there is no searching, no examination into the "why" of things, for the now too complaisant mind, enters too late into what it is taught, and losing both premises and argument, hears only the conclusion.

There is no subject taught in our schools, the teaching of which deserves more skill and attention than this subject of Elementary Composition. At one time, not long ago, perhaps it is so in many cases yet, it was supposed by the presiding genius of the school-room, that this power to compose was an especial ready-made gift, probably from one's fairy godmother, and the child went on in the path of learning till one day ere he had quite shed all his milk-teeth, the good teacher was inspired to announce, "Write a composition for to-morrow." "A composition?" with the upward cadence of little frightened voices, but the soul of that wise person, like those of Ossian's warriors, had again rolled into itself, and when it unrolled, Friendship or Gratitude came forth in