

great maritime powers of the world. Two or three lessons are on the surface. The first and most obvious is the terrible destruction of life and property involved in such a conflict. Humanity recoils from the thought of thousands of men shut up in the prison-house of one of those great iron-clad hulks, exposed to a terrible rain of death-dealing missiles hurled by modern engines of destruction—missiles which come crashing through walls of triple steel and iron, and sweeping away the strongest turrets and other defences of wood and iron as if they were but glass, or dropping upon the deck only to burst with thunderous explosion and strew destruction on every side. To add to these indescribable horrors, there is the constant dread of the torpedo, which may at any instant shatter the hulk and send the huge iron trap to the bottom, with all on board. When one reads the story of the horrible carnage in this contest between the comparatively feeble fleets of two Eastern nations, scarcely emerged from barbarism, he is able to form some conception of what a similar engagement between the fleets of two of the great powers, say England and France, would mean. Surely there is some reason to hope that the diabolical nature of such a struggle will be sufficient to prevent so-called Christian nations from ever permitting their statesmen to plunge them into such a gulf of horrors.

Another lesson which this Eastern sea-fight is well adapted to teach is that of the tremendous cost of a modern war. The money value of the ammunition used in the conflict must have been enormous, when every discharge of the gun means the dissipation of a sum which would be quite a fortune to many a poor labourer. Can it be that the overtaxed masses of Europe will ever permit the proceeds of their hard toil to be wasted by the million in such a way? Perhaps the most hopeful feature of the whole affair is its suggestion that the naval wars of the future must be quickly decided. It is evident that whenever the fleets are tolerably well matched, the battle will not be decided until the greater number of the immensely costly ships of one or probably of both parties shall have been shattered, probably many of them sunk and irretrievably lost, while others will have suffered such damage as will require months of toil and millions of money to repair. Under such conditions there would be some ground for hope that a single great battle might decide the contest. But it would, perhaps, be equally likely that one great struggle would leave both parties bruised, exhausted, and sullen, and only too ready to take advantage of the enforced truce to repair their vessels, thereby laying still more crushing burdens upon the people, and retarding the progress of the peaceful arts and industries, perhaps for generations. On its face the results of the engagement seem to

emphasize the folly of putting such enormous sums of money into single vessels, any one of which may be sent to the bottom in a moment. So far as appears, the smaller, swifter cruisers were really the more effective. So far as the combatants in the present instance are concerned, there is no reason to suppose that either will be ready to propose conditions of peace that will be accepted by the others. The moment may be propitious, however, for foreign intervention. The powers of Europe will not care to look quietly on while one of the great nations of antiquity is being overthrown, with the probable result that her immense territories would be given over to rapine and chaos.

#### GOOD ENGLISH.

It is of the utmost importance that good English should, like common sense, be the rule and not the exception in oral converse as well as in written composition. The ability to use good English may surely be considered a fair test of the "liberal education" (supposed to be) given in our schools and colleges. But notwithstanding the amount of talk about the duty of the schools to impart a fair mastery of the vernacular, and the ardent predictions of those "educational reformers" who were active in having "language lessons" substituted for the study of grammar, it must be acknowledged that bad English is a too common factor in the every-day intercourse, by tongue or pen, of supposedly educated people. With the great, shall we say superlative attention, paid in our country to education, it is but natural to expect that a book on the important subject of prose composition should be looked for, that would prove alike creditable to its compilers and serviceable to teachers and students. Of such a book we have seen the advance sheets, and Professor Alexander and Mr. Libby may, even before publication, be commended for the high character of their work. The lack of proper method, the jumble of ill-assorted selections, the crowding together of technical terms and rules that are forgotten almost as soon as memorized, may be mentioned as some of the objectionable features of some books on the art of writing. In the forthcoming work we find the main divisions recognized by progressive teachers of to-day: narration, description, and exposition, with their suggested subdivisions duly set forth. Unlike too many pretentious writers of composition and rhetoric, the authors have not lost sight of the fact that in order to "practice composition," students must practise *thinking*—that right expression is the outcome of right thought, and, it may be added, that both have not a little to do with right character. How to learn to think is the question of questions for the student, and to think is to grasp the

relation of parts—to pass from a vague, incoherent whole to a definite whole—that is, to a whole at last perceived to be made up of clearly defined parts. This the authors have kept clearly before them. They know what mental movement prevails in description, narration and exposition; they know that the student's mind must move in like manner in appropriating the thought, and they know that he must be capable of this thinking process, in order to be capable of clear and concise expression. The numerous well selected models of style from some of the most notable orators and writers of modern times which form the groundwork of the scheme of instruction; the clear, concise, yet critical, comments on the various selections; and the suggested topics for composition, with plans and ample directions—cannot fail to prove stimulating and satisfactory to both teacher and to scholar. All the various forms of prose composition seem to receive due attention. For completeness, thoroughness, and sound pedagogical treatment this volume will far surpass anything heretofore published in Canada and equal any work of the kind that has yet come to our hands from abroad.

#### MUNICIPAL ECONOMY.

Circumstances of great local importance are just now forcing this large section of the science of political economy upon the attention of the citizens of many cities in the United States and Canada. In Toronto, at this moment, the question of electric lighting has given it a prominence in the thoughts of the citizens which it has never had before, save perhaps at the time of the warm discussion which preceded the completion of the existing arrangement with the Street Railway Company. While all reasonable persons will admit that the wise decision in a given case in which immediate action is required must be largely determined by practical considerations incident to the particular occasion, the general principle is one of so great importance as to warrant discussion and, if possible, decision, apart from all incidental and temporary considerations. If the sound abstract principle could be once for all agreed on, there would be nothing left but for each locality to choose its own time and opportunity for reducing that principle to practice. It is always possible that the method which may be demonstrated to be logically and scientifically the best, may not be the best at a given moment and under peculiar circumstances. Nevertheless, the people will be all the better for having accepted a sound theory, however slow and tedious may be the process most readily available for changing the old for the new, in working up to that theory.

Viewed in the abstract, there is, it can hardly be denied, a strange inconsistency in the municipal methods pursued in, e.g.,