

very obvious. The teacher is called upon imperatively, if he be a real teacher, to open up to his pupils new horizons of thought, and this he can do but very imperfectly if he possess not a fund of words. For what are words but the signs of ideas, and what are ideas but the offspring of the mind; how then can the mind of the teacher hold converse with the collective mind of his pupils if there be no channel of communication between them. You might as well endeavour to empty the contents of one bottle into another without first taking out the cork. True, I am now speaking more especially of instruction, but the same remark will equally apply to education. You cannot expect to confront your pupils with questions which will develop their reasoning faculties unless you put your questions in a sensible and reasonable shape, and this I maintain you cannot do if you are continually suffering from a famine of words. But here you may say that school is not the place for a display of grandiloquent language. True enough, nor is any sphere in life suitable for such an exhibition of verbal balloon ascensions, where the speaker taking the place of the aeronaut is lifted up by gas at the danger of being suddenly impaled upon some house top, a spectacle to angels and to men. But aside from jesting, the study of words is of absolute necessity for both teacher and pupil. A great deal is often said about the difficulty of teaching composition. The greatest barrier I verily believe to progress in this subject is the combined lack of the true import and value of words on the part of both teacher and pupil. Give a scholar a supply of useful and common words and it is surprising how readily he will write for you a short theme. In connection with this point I might say that an excellent habit has been inculcated in the schools of this district,—I believe by our In-

spector, Mr. Johnston,—I refer to the practice of calling upon the pupils to substitute other words for many of the important ones which occur in the different passages of the reading lesson. This I consider to be a very key to the study of composition, and will do more to facilitate a pupil's progress in this subject than all the abstract themes you may fling at him from now until doomsday. The study of words and the subject of composition are so closely connected that I cannot refrain from throwing out a few suggestions on methods of teaching the latter. I must say that I really pity a young boy or girl dismissed from school in the evening with the benediction of an abstract subject lying flat across his or her brain to be worked into a web of composition and laid at the feet of the teacher next day. I call such an exaction on the part of teachers the very keenest torture, very nearly akin to the torture in which Domitian, the Roman Emperor, took so much pleasure—that of piercing flies with a bare bodkin. How many of us, I ask, could even define some of the subjects which are given by teachers to their pupils? Take, for instance, the word "duty." Why, you could define it in twelve different ways, and then you have not one side of the square. But of course pupils, forsooth, are expected to do what the teacher himself cannot do, and hence the generosity of the teacher in placing his pupils sometimes for a period of three days in these torturing stocks of composition. Composition, did I say? It is a misnomer, rather call it imposition. I have from time to time seen samples of these compositions, and scripturally speaking, they resembled nothing that is under the earth, in the sea, or upon the earth. True, you could discover a slight resemblance in them to copies of the Magna Charta, signed by King John at Runnymede, but the change