

gard it, and intend trying to treat it, this is rank nonsense ; for is not the art of conversation also the art of composition. Must we not in talking try to clothe our ideas in appropriate language, or else how will we be understood by those whom we are talking to ; so that in a manner a child commences composition long ere he comes to school. After he enters the school-room almost, if not altogether, the first lesson he receives, is a lesson in composition. To be sure the teacher does not say "Come now my little dears, and have a lesson in composition ;" nor would they understand him if he did. Still, if he teaches properly, he does teach composition. The first lesson on our table, is about "an ox." The first thing we do is to ask the children what an ox is ? what it looks like ? what it is used for ? &c. In answering the question, is not the child composing ? We ask them to tell us what the lessons said, and they in their own words give us an account of it. Are they not having a lesson in transposition ? Thus from the very first day a child enters the school-room we encourage him to give us his own ideas about persons and things in general, and help him to clothe those ideas in proper language. We then teach him composition, and what is inseparable from it, language lessons, and in such a manner as makes them pleasant to him. Thus at every stage in his progress in school he is trained up in habits of thought, without which it is impossible to excel in composition, nor are his lessons confined to those he gets in school. I have now in my mind's eye a teacher who taught his pupils as much, if not more, of their composition, on the way to and from school, and at intermissions in rough weather, than in lessons in the school. He always encouraged them to come with him and talk to him ; he encouraged them to debate with him and also among themselves, with him as umpire. He showed them how to arrange what they wished to say, in the best manner, and thus

helped to form the desire to be able to do it better. Every teacher may not have the chance that he had, still we all have plenty of opportunities if we only rightly improve them. But I have taken up more than enough of your time on this point which some may think partly foreign to my text.

In the second place : What does composition do ? A late eminent writer has said, "composition gives us that power that puts us in possession of the future—transports us to all distances—makes us conceive objects invisible to the sense—introduces us to what is merely possible—sustains our strength by hope—extends the narrow sphere of our existence beyond the present, and thus by deepening the sources of our sensibility, fertilizes the field of our virtues." What is there that can do more than this ? What greater end could we want to accomplish than to deepen the sources of our sensibility and fertilize the field of our virtues ? Or, I might ask, what nobler aim could we have than cultivating our virtues or the virtues of our pupils ? But you may ask does composition properly taught accomplish these ends ? Does it put us in possession of the future ? We know that to be in reality in possession of the future is impossible ; still the one who composes and studies deeply to be able to excel, can, by comparing the past with the present, look forward to the future with far more certainty than he who does not so search and compare events. Does it transport us to all distances ? What is it transports us wherever we fancy to go ? Is it not imagination ? Of course we must except hard cash, which has the magic power to take us anywhere if we only have enough of it. If we have to stay at home till our hard cash takes us abroad, I fear it will be a long time before we travel far. To illustrate better I will relate a school-day experience. We were studying composition, and the master proposed to another girl and me to write a letter as if we were travelling. On the road going home