

the changes made by Wordsworth in the different editions of his poem, "To the Cuckoo," says of one of the stanzas: "Almost half a century was required for the production of this dew-drop of literature."

In every well-equipped theological college there is a teacher of homiletics, who is assumed to be himself a competent writer of sermons, as well as an efficient critic of the sermons written by others. But it is obviously impossible for him to do justice to either the subject or the students during the professional part of their course, unless during the preparatory part of it they have had some such general training as that above outlined. Homiletics is rhetoric applied to sermonizing, but it is rhetoric nevertheless. In order that the valuable services of eminent teachers may be productive of the maximum of benefit, the students must be experts in the art of composition before they come under his direction.

II. SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT OF ENGLISH.

But important and even indispensable as the practical treatment of English is, it is not everything. The preacher may, as the result of mere imitation, be generally correct in his use of language, and yet at times make himself ridiculous without being aware that he is doing so, unless he has acquired the habit of investigating for himself the manner in which language performs its function of expressing thought. It has been too much the fashion in English training to assume that the general principles discovered by the writers of treatises on grammar and rhetoric might be legitimately and usefully appropriated by the student with a view to their practical application. Apart from the fact that this process of acquisition involves an exercise only of memory, and is therefore comparatively useless for purposes of intellectual training, it must never be forgotten (1) that the student should not be taught to look forward to writing by rule, and (2) that even if writing by rule were the proper practice, he would not be able to retain rules in his memory unless he had discovered them for himself. No one writes English the better for having mastered the contents of a treatise on composition or rhetoric; any one will write English the better for having discovered for himself by the scientific study of the language the