

will be the resultant of two forces, viz., the pupil's inherent tendency toward certain modes of thought and expression, and the force of influences coming in part from the authors which he reads, and also from the persons (including his teachers) with whom he comes in contact. Any attempt to mould his style after that of even the most approved writers in a certain line, must necessarily be made with a certain allowance for personal tastes and preferences. Yet none the less the attempt may often be made with a class, with more or less benefit to all its members, and with marked benefit to those who are, so to speak, "en rapport" with the author. Take, for instance, the case of a class struggling with the problem of how to write an acceptable composition of from one to two pages of foolscap in length, on some theme connected with ordinary, everyday life, and which leaves little room for good objective writing. Here their very familiarity with the material appears to make much of it unavailable for the pupils' purposes. But at this point let the class read several of Washington Irving's Sketches with the teacher, and they will no doubt soon discover some of the secrets of his charming reflecto-descriptive style and be able to use these methods to enlarge on and enrich the erstwhile apparently barren and unprofitable topic. And who will say that they have not therein found a principle of good descriptive writing capable of as wide application as most of the principles in other admittedly fixed arts?

The question at issue between those who refuse to see any benefit resulting to students in Composition from

the analysis of the methods of good writers, and those who advocate this system, seems to narrow itself down to whether imitation shall be conscious or unconscious. Perhaps the true answer to this is, as in so many other cases, one which admits both. There can be no doubt, for instance, that pupils who are great readers of books outside of their school work, are usually found to excel in writing essays. Yet this will, I believe, be found true of only the simpler forms of Composition, such as narrative, and, sometimes, word-painting. Even in these cases the style can be much improved by drawing attention to the methods of the masters in these departments of literature. While, in the difficult kinds of Expository Composition, the analytic method will prove almost essential, if clear and logical methods of proceeding to develop a theme are aimed at. In all lines of school work much of the teacher's effort is devoted to directing the attention of the pupils to the things which it is desired to impress on their minds. Much that is seen in a physical way makes little or no impression on the mind until the latter is thus directed to it. Hence, I believe that there is the same field for conscious effort in appropriating to himself the results of centuries of rhetorical invention in our language, that is open to the student in other departments of study. But he must use it wisely, and avoid anything that savors of plagiarism, on the one hand, while, on the other, he does not disdain the legitimate use of phraseology or method which has, by long usage, become the common heritage of all English-speaking people.

In May number, page 179, for seeds read needs; page 182, for leaving read living, and for Philotiles read Philoctetes.