

ground flying rings, ladder and poles and slide may be added. The rural community which becomes interested in the welfare of its school and pupils to this extent will be surprised to find that the young people are too busy and interested to think of the town and its attractions.

—Editor.

### THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

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(Continued from March Number)

My work in English Composition in the Ladies' College, corresponds in some degree with the High School work of the Public Schools. My pupils come from Canada, Bermuda, Newfoundland and United States. In most cases I find the foundation work very poor. I find it necessary in the first year to teach largely the rules of syntax, and correction of common errors. For a text book I use Lockwood's lessons in English, published by Ginn & Company, Boston. It has sane rules for punctuation and capital letters, as well as good exercises in Purity of Diction.

To a large number of girls who come to the Ladies' College, writing an essay means simply copying something from the pages of an encyclopedia or other book of information. They are afraid to express their own thoughts in words of their own. To put matters in their own words, they "hate to write and just can't do it!"

My first work must be to develop interest, and interest and attention are not to be taken as the same. I can command attention in a class of grown up girls, but I always keep at the back of my mind a story told by one of my friends. She was teaching some children, and one day noticed a child whose eyes did not move from her teacher's face. Encouraged with the interest manifested, the teacher grew eloquent. She felt she was making an impression. As she finished—the child came closer and said: "Teacher, I think you are real pretty. I like the way you move your mouth." I know just how that teacher felt, but for the most part attention deepens into interest, and then the work shows improvement.

I have been asked to tell exactly how I conduct a lesson, and this is one of my first lessons in Intermediate Composition. The girls are nearly all strangers in Sackville, so I spend a short time in class, talking about the geography of the place. I draw a map on the board, and show them the position of the points of interest. For home work I ask them to write a description of the view from the front windows of the Ladies' College. Next day in class someone reads aloud, Roberts' description of the Tantramar, in "The Heart that Knows." I realize that the best part of an education is lost if a sense of their own failure does not come home to my pupils, and as they compare their own attempts with the

masterpiece, their short comings never fail to impress them. We then discuss Roberts' description, with which you are are doubtless all familiar. We study the plan of writing.

The Time—Summer afternoon.

Sensation—Space—Loneliness.

Detail—(1) Places—Fundy, Minudie, Marshes, Beau-sejour, Tantramar River.

(2) Color—Rosy clover, purple vetch, grass-green in level, blush and beryl in wind. Wild roses—pale pink, dry mud—rusty streak.

(3) Life—Black and gold bumblebees. Brown Marsh Hawks, Field Mice.

(4) Sky—The blue of thinned Cobalt.

Then we read other descriptions of marshes—how Dickens gives us the picture in "Great Expectations," and that wonderful portrayal of feeling given by Sidney Lanier in "The Marshes of Glynn." We compare them all, and try to find in the writings the personality of the authors.

Gradually it dawns on the students that they have five senses instead of one, and that in writing they need them all—that in written descriptions some points have to fade into the far distance of perspective—and that two pictures taken by the camera without changing the film result only in confusion. These ideas come slowly, and it is only after some weeks practice that I trace a girl's own personality in her essay.

To vary the work, I ask for a description of a favorite nook or building, and I make a rough drawing of it as a correction. Sometimes the pupils themselves make the drawing from a description given to them. Sometimes I ask them to write an imitation of the style of some author, a method not to be despised when you read that it was R. L. Stevenson's own way of learning to write.

In correcting, I at first draw lines under the errors, letting my pupils think about their own mistakes. Afterward I give the whole class the benefit of the criticism. We discuss sentences to see if they can be improved in their structure. We discuss words to see if other words would give a clearer meaning. We spend time on synonyms and antonyms and talk of the shades of difference in the meanings of words. We think of the correct prepositions to follow certain words—"different from," "try to," etc.

We have some essays read before the class. Sometimes they are not well written, but the next ones from the same girls are usually better. At least once a month, I have each girl bring her essay book to my room. There I take time to encourage, point out improvement and ways of improvement. I draw attention to the poor work, censure carelessness, urge the giving of a girl's