

centrated upon another object; and not until she has acquired the power of using her needles so as to impose little or no restraint upon the action of her mind and tongue, can she again pour forth her stream of abuse. Now, do not pencil and paper act upon the child as did the needles and worsted upon the virago? There is writing, spelling, and arrangement of words and ideas to be attended to; if the more mechanical of these exercises absorb the attention, the more strikingly mental operation will in a great measure be inert.

Another difficulty arises from the young composers imagining that they must make a great distinction between written and spoken language, believing that what they write should be very different from what they say in properly conducted conversation. This leads them to exercise their memories in trying to find out fine words as used by others, instead of spontaneously giving expression to their own thoughts.

But a little more formidable difficulty has to be encountered when the pupils are required to originate and arrange ideas before giving expression to them. The simplest plan to pursue, is for the teacher to put a series of questions upon the subject, in the order in which he wishes to be followed in the written exercise, the answers to these questions to be noted down by the class, the whole to be connected in a proper manner.

There are other cases in which the interrogatives *what*, *why*, *when*, *where*, *how*, will suggest an intelligible and clear order of arrangement.

PREPARATORY STEPS.

Children are often called to engage in composition without previous preparation, writing materials are placed in their hands and they are told to do so and so. This is a great mistake, and some preparatory step should be taken at a very early period of the child's school history. Every teacher knows the difference between teaching those who are brought up by intelligent parents and in cultivated society, and those who are reared in an opposite condition of life. In the one case, the ordinary phraseology is pleasing and correct, the other has to be introduced to almost a new language. The one is prepared, the other is not.