

soul inspiring influence—and will continue to do so until the wheels of time cease to roll. We may probably feel inclined to complain that Nature has not endowed us with a sufficient amount of energy and mental strength,—consequently come to the conclusion that it would be useless for us to make the least effort towards rising to note, or becoming in any way useful to our fellow creatures. But with such reasoning as this I do not agree. I hold that we all are in truth very *high born*. I have yet to learn that a mortal who can look upon a Being of infinite perfection as his father and the highest order of spirits as his brethren is not high born. It is my belief that every person of ordinary abilities, possesses that amount of native talent, which, if properly cultivated and rightly directed, will enable him not only to become a benefit to those by whom he is surrounded, but to be a light in the world, and lead his mind in such a channel that when life's checkered scenes are over, his emancipated soul may finally be ushered into that haven of eternal repose.

I am of the opinion that man almost invariably makes himself what he is. In proportion as his virtues elevate him, or his vices degrade him, he assimilates himself to the celestial spirits or to the vilest animals. Look if you please, at some of the greatest worthies that have lived, and see if they were not self made men. Columbus the discoverer passed his youthful career in obscurity, following the occupation of a weaver; the celebrated Franklin was a journeyman Printer; Virgil was a Roman Baker's lad; Sir Humphrey Davy was a currier's apprentice; the Empress Catharine of Russia was a peasant, and lived as a servant for many years; and even Shakespeare himself was poor and a menial. What was it, I ask you, that made these great personages among the most renowned of the world? Was it not *energy*, genius, a clear and vigorous understanding, a strong and good heart, and an invincible determination, and "an honest purpose once fixed, will not fail to bring victory?" These persons, I consider, in a great measure, fulfilled the Mission of Life. And why shall not we follow their example? Why shall not we (if we have not already) open the eyes of the soul to the great purpose of life? Why shall not we encompass high and glorious achievements? What if we do at times grow pale over our midnight lamps; what if we do frequently close our eyes to the FLOWERS THAT blossom over life's pathway, and call in that depth of thought which will reach to those secret places in the universe—where no eye but that of the Almighty can penetrate. And may we ever be urged onward by the impression that, "what others have done we can do," and that nothing short of a never-give-up principle will bring about very important results.

Now my fellow-teachers, if my subject will permit, I would like to express my idea of the mission of a teacher. I consider our profession to be one of very high standing; one, the duties of which will tax our noblest powers; one in which we will find ample scope for head, heart, energy and skill. I believe it to be not

only our privilege, but duty as teachers, to set forth the examples of distinguished excellence in a manner suited to make a powerful and pleasing impression on the youthful minds and at the same time to instil that accurate information which will cause the mind to expand, and like the rays of a beautiful star, shine all over the world. It is our duty to inculcate the sentiments of truth and goodness; to give our heroes for the conflict of life; to teach them to combat the manifold doubts and assaults to which they will be exposed. ~~It is not our office to give words so much as thought; not mere maxims, but living principles; not teaching them to be honest "because honesty is the best policy," but because to be honest is right; it is teaching them to love the good for the sake of good; to be virtuous in their actions because they are so in their hearts.~~ It is our duty to hasten the coming of that bright day when the dawn of general knowledge shall chase away those careless, lingering mists which surround so many in the social circle. And while with all patience, firmness and gentleness, we impart worldly instruction, may heaven enable us to plant in childhood's fruitful soil, the seeds of heavenly grace, which will cause the soul, though surrounded with much that is pleasing, to aspire for an entrance in those fairer climes of bliss, in the regions of immortality, and make those lasting impressions which life's tempestuous ocean will never efface, which eternity alone will unfold.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT COMPOSITION.

"I do wish I knew what to write about," exclaims the school-boy who has been thinking over all the subjects he ever heard of, from Education, Temperance, etc., to the Seasons and Riding Down Hill. None of them suit him; but a composition he must have by next Friday afternoon, when all studies are laid aside to hear the general exercises.

Every individual who has attended the District School, well remembers the aversion he felt, and the trouble he encountered in attempting to perform this exercise, both because he could with difficulty find a suitable subject, and, when it was selected, he was perplexed to know how to commence, or how to proceed.—This same drudgery is still insisted upon in our schools, and no scholar can be blamed for disliking such a task. All readily admit the importance of it. Even the scholar, after many unsuccessful attempts, will frequently launch off upon Composition Writing itself, and, lamenting his own inability, extol the value of the task he hates, and his teacher for requiring it of him, such a prevailing sentiment is there that this is an important branch of education. And this is true; but why it is so, or how to derive the most benefit from it, comparatively few understand as they ought.

A right conception of the end obtained, is necessary to a knowledge of the use of the proper means to be adopted for it. What is the object of this exercise? One important use is, to enable the student to express his thoughts with ease, propriety and force. The difference is

very striking between the production of one who has been accustomed to write, and one who has not. It is sufficient for the present purpose, to mention only one other object, viz.: to awaken and develop thought. The present method of conducting this exercise, is just as consistent as a parent would adopt who should command his son to perform a certain work, of which he knew nothing, without giving him any directions concerning it.—The teacher, with a countenance full of meaning, makes the declaration to the school, that, on such a day, compositions must be read by all the older portion of the scholars. When the day arrives, part, duly prepared, read a collection of disconnected, unmeaning sentences, some evade the duty by reading half a dozen lines, and the rest have nothing at all, so that the next week or two is spent in compelling these delinquents to write.—This is the manner in which the system works, and, before the term is out, the teacher, in all probability, will have alienated the affections of many of his scholars by attempting to enforce a requirement that is so disagreeable.

Now, we will throw out a few suggestions which must commend themselves to all who are interested in this subject, and who understand the difficulty of obtaining compositions from a promiscuous collection of students, such as compose most of our country schools. It is evident that the teacher cannot expect to awaken any enthusiasm among his pupils unless he feels it himself; therefore, let him convince them that he is interested in their improvement in this department, and duly feels the importance of it. On account of its being an occasional exercise, he must enter into the spirit of it, if he would be fully successful. Again, he must expect to devote considerable time and attention to it. If he makes it interesting and profitable to his scholars, he must prepare himself specially for it; for, from the nature of the study, the resources of his own mind must furnish much of the material upon which his pupils work. An excellent plan is, to from the whole school into classes, according to their attainments and have them exercise in writing regularly—say once a week—in whatever way he may think best. He may give the younger scholars simple and familiar objects to describe; the more advanced cannot do anything with more profit than to form and re-cast sentences, with reference to their perspicuity, energy, neatness, etc., and also to the choice of words. His own judgment must determine the character and length of these exercises.

When a stated time is appointed for the scholars to prepare compositions that are to be the products of their choicest thoughts, direction should be given them in regard to their subjects. They are very likely to select one upon which they are least qualified to write. It is well for the teacher to frequently select their subjects, —such as are adapted to their individual capacities and habits of mind. Direction should also be given as to the manner of treating them. No one thinks of constructing a building without having a regular plan before him. Every writer, also, must have what he designs to prove,