

effort on the part of the subject toward improvement, rarely results in much bettering of the style, unless aided by analytic processes of thought directed either by an outside agent, or by the intelligence developed first in other directions by the person himself.

The assumption that Composition is an imitative art, has, at any rate, been the dominant principle in the construction of several of the textbooks on this subject published in this country within recent years. Of these it suffices to mention here, as best known to the profession in this province, the one authorized for use in High Schools, "Composition from Models," by Messrs. Alexander & Libby; and the recently published "Elementary English Composition," by Mr. F. H. Sykes. The former work, which has now been before the public for several years, has not, it would seem to me, yet received the recognition in our schools which it deserves. This is probably in part owing to prejudices in favor of old methods and lack of familiarity with the book on the part of teachers themselves, but is also, no doubt, owing in part to the very completeness and the exhaustive character of the critical part of the work, which is likely to convey the impression that the work is too difficult to be put into the hands of ordinary High School pupils, except in the highest Forms. But such considerations need deter no one from giving the book a trial, at least in the Middle and the Upper Forms of our High Schools. While the rhetorical hints on each Model will be found to be extremely useful and suggestive to the teacher, it will in many cases be quite unnecessary to make any but a very limited use of them directly in the class. In other words, minute analysis of the mode of expression will seldom be found a profitable exercise. This is more particularly true of the Junior classes, where dry philosoph-

ic discussions on such a subject quickly beget listlessness and indifference. But it is altogether a different matter when the lesson takes the form of an investigation as to how the writer gets his thoughts on the subject, and how, in a general way, he expresses them. This is more apt to appeal to the practical side of the pupil's nature, which, at this stage, is apt to be more responsive than the philosophic, and if skillfully done, may oftentimes result in impressing on the pupil's mind one or two general principles for future guidance in this form of Composition. Of course this can be done without using the book in question if the teacher has the facilities and the time for making appropriate selections from other books used by the pupils, or to be found in the School Library. The advantages of having the selections properly classified, and available at all times for use in the class, are, however, so manifest, that the latter plan must in comparison be seen to be much inferior.

Having spent one or two lesson spaces in examining in this way the Models for themes of some particular class,—for example, descriptions of landscapes—the class may then be called upon to write a composition on a similar theme,—as a description of some bit of pretty scenery in the neighborhood. While anything approaching to slavish imitation of the Model is to be discouraged in these compositions, the pupils will usually now be found to approach the topic with a confidence and a clearness of conception as to what is the right line to pursue, begotten of their knowledge of what has been done in this line by approved authors.

So far, and in most cases but little farther, would I go in using imitation as a basis for the cultivation of style in Composition work. The style which any particular pupil may ultimately develop, though essentially imitative, will be an eclectic one, and