

teaching still prevails throughout the breadth of this country?—the good usable text-book is the chief dependence, the indispensable tool which almost wholly shapes the final teaching result.

And notwithstanding the days of talking, explaining, and lecturing, I am old fashioned enough to believe that the real downright study of the proper book by the pupil is a most useful adjunct in any course of mental training for the young.

### ENGLISH COMPOSITION.\*

BY MISS C. NOLAN, HUNTINGDON.

Our divisions of this subject are Characteristics of Good English, Method of Instruction, Subject Matter, Criticism, Barriers and Incentives. The chief essentials of good, plain English, as spoken and written by the masses in their every-day intercourse and correspondence, are conciseness, clearness, force, and beauty. These characteristics may and ought to be acquired in our elementary and secondary schools. In regard to the first, any journalist will tell you that diffuseness is the greatest fault of the articles sent for publication. Ours is a busy age. To say nothing of the coveted space, there is no time for wading through a sea of words, in order to extract one feeble thought, yet, the condensing process may be carried so far as to make the treat too strong for any but the man whose powers of mental digestion are gigantic.

Is it unpardonable heresy even to think that Carlyle's French Revolution, without detracting from its literary beauty, might have been written in such a manner as to be more easily understood, and therefore more prized by the average man? Grandeur and depth of conception, combined with simplicity of style, are in demand at the present time. We no longer consider those addresses from pulpit and platform which are not understood, the finest and best.

This also is too intense an age to bestow much admiration on the flowery article, whose chief merit lies in its figures of speech; yet we do not enjoy the perusal of a harsh, bald statement of facts, any more than we value

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\* A paper read at the Teachers' Convention held in Montreal, October, 1897.