

which will make it difficult for him to express himself in a direct way. Moreover there is a certain vagueness about thought which he will not fully appreciate until he attempts to clothe his cogitations in words, and it is only after years of practise that he will be able to translate with ease, the mysterious and evanescent characters of the mind into the grosser elements of language. But as language is the only means of communication between mind and mind, how important it is that each one should put himself into possession of this instrument by which he may overreach material confines and commune with the inner and higher nature of his fellow man.

Another difficulty before the young writer lies in the fact that hitherto he has been exercised more with habits of observation than reflection. His thought has been continually referred to the objective world, and sensuous impressions have received the greater part of his attention. Now when he withdraws himself from the diversions of sense and turns the eye of his mind in upon the subtle operations of spirit, their very subtlety confounds him. Accustomed to consider tangible things, he is at a loss how to secure these ephemeral products of his intellectual activity. The remedy is to retain each thought until it becomes distinct; in other words, practise the habit of connected thinking until you can remember a course of thought with the same vividness that you recall the capes of Nova Scotia.

Then, again; in attempting to follow out the idea which his theme suggests, at certain points the young author is met by numerous side issues which seem to grow naturally out of his subject, and in attempting to cover all these, his argument loses force and directness. It is impossible in the short compass of an essay to complete more than the main thought, so to insure directness we must avoid side issues.

Though the path before the young writer may be a thorny one, he must remember that his object is a glorious one and his purpose noble. Let this inspire him in his struggle with himself, until he has conquered his refractory passions and brought his untrained capabilities under the guidance of his will. Then will his writings reflect a power which will carry conviction.

From what we have said, I think it is evident, that in order to become successful writers it is necessary that we should observe the rules of reasoning, that we should be direct, concise, logical and complete. Direct, in order to reach our conclusions without multiplying words, concise that the judgment may not be burdened with too many considerations, logical that the current of thought may not be broken or weakened, and complete that the mind may rest in assured conviction of the truth.

The object of every writer should be to impart truth. But truth presented in an illogical or indirect way loses half its force and fails of its object, not

only so but by exciting disgust defeats its object, and drives men further away from the light. An abstract truth has no active effect on the mind, it is not until logical deductions are made from it and applied to human conditions, that it becomes a burning question to mankind. Seeing this let each writer strive to bring his deductions into unison with the laws of thought, and aim to present truth in such a form that it will work out glorious results, through the lives and characters of those about him.

O. H. D.

ECHOES OF THE PAST.

TO-NIGHT my thoughts are travelling back to my old college days. I have clearly in my mind the old Acadia edifice with its massive pillars and symmetrical form. How quiet and majestic it looked. It invested the "Hill" with a dignity and glory. For those that studied in it no picture of the old college is needed. It is photographed on their minds beyond the possibility of effacement. To-day Acadia's old students meet and chat about the bygone. There is something very tender and sacred about those years that hold so large a place in the life—those years that so mysteriously affect one's subsequent course. Martial says that the retrospect of no period of life ought to give pain to a good man. Even if one is not very good, one can talk with zest and enthusiasm about college scenes and life and doings. But to return. The old college is before me now. It is so easy to reproduce it. What a wealth of life and experience is bound up in it. In fact, we can say with regard to the past what Cowper said of his mother's picture:

"Time has but half succeeded in his theft.
Thyself removed, the power to soothe me left."

Perhaps the readers of the ATHENÆUM would like to know what kind of literary work used to be done by the students in Old Acadia twenty-five or thirty years ago. Well, said students set a pretty high estimate on their powers. They regarded themselves as callow, if not full-fledged, geniuses; a genius, you see, was not such a *rara avis in terris* in those days. The afflatus seemed to descend without invocation. Compositions were dashed off with amazing rapidity, and you could scarcely tell whence they came and whither they tended. They were largely instantaneous creations, leaving both creator and reader alike in wonder. Neither had you any option. Write you *must*. The thoughts came forth as lava from the crater—unsolicited, immediate, victorious, superabundant. Pens flew across the paper in their eagerness to arrest, if possible, the thick-coming, outbursting thoughts. No matter what the theme was—the powers were equal to the subject, or rather it was as