

instructor in mechanical engineering. He is a graduate of McGill and a former instructor in that university. Night classes will open the last week in October, and will include women as well as men. A great interest has been aroused in technical education throughout Nova Scotia, chiefly owing to the visit of the Royal Commission, and large accessions to the night classes and to the Technical College are confidently expected. Last year's graduates of the college, Principal Sexton reports, have all secured good positions and are doing well.

A writer in the *North American Review* asserts that manual training is almost as good a preventative of crime as vaccination is of smallpox. "What per cent. of the prisoners under your care have received any manual training beyond some acquaintance with farming?" a northern man asked the warden of a southern penitentiary. "Not one per cent.," replied the warden. "Have you no mechanics in prison?" "Only one mechanic; that is, one man who claims to be a housepainter." "Have you any shoemakers?" asked the visitor. "Never had a shoemaker." "Have you any tailors?" "Never had a tailor." "Any printers?" "Any carpenters?" "Never had a man in this prison that could draw a straight line."

The Port Hood *Gleanings* has a very timely editorial under the caption, "Visit Your Schools." Parental neglect of the district school has kept the whole system dyspeptic for the past forty years. To this neglect closed schools, mean, shabby, homeless school houses and starved and disgusted school teachers are chargeable. The ladies of the district make fancy work and pies to raise money to paint the minister's house and present him with new harness. But the old den where the children spend half their waking childhood is neglected. The parents rarely if ever go near the place. They do not try to become intimate with and helpful to the teacher. On the contrary, they often listen to the children's tales and make the teacher's work as difficult and discouraging as possible. Most parents send their children to school as they send them to the store for a pound of soap. All this must be reversed. When the mother of the family takes as much pride in the school house as she does in her little flower patch or the best room where she hangs her needlework, there will be a startling revolution in our school work.—*Sydney Post*.

This is plain talk. Perhaps it is needed in some places, but we hope these places are becoming fewer.

English Composition in the Higher Grades,

ELEANOR ROBINSON.

When subjects are set for the pupil to get up from books, special instruction is needed. The untrained pupil will waste time in finding the right books. The book found, he does not know what sections to read, nor what facts to note. Too often he contents himself with hurried, slavish copying. No real thought is exercised, no knowledge gained. The information is transferred directly from reference book to paper, instead of passing through the writer's mind, and the result is a string of sentences or paragraphs with neither unity nor sequence.

Take for illustration the comparatively simple task of writing a sketch of the life of some famous man. Let us say, Nelson. The paper will begin: "Horatio Nelson, Viscount Nelson, was a younger son of the Rev. Edmund Nelson, and was born at Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk, September 29, 1738." Follows a page of detail about the hero's school days. Then, from the Encyclopedia, "A love of adventure and a daring spirit which developed itself from his earliest years, inclined the future admiral to the life of the sea, and through the interest of a maternal uncle the lad entered the navy in 1770." Two pages follow, containing huddled particulars about every ship that Nelson served in, and every action at which he was present for the next twenty years. The handwriting begins to get bad. Two or three columns of encyclopædia are skipped. "The time had now arrived (no particular context) when his genius and skill were to appear in full force in an independent command." Then from Cadiz to Martinique, from Naples to Alexandria, we bounce back and forth in an inconsequent and bewildering way. "The enemy" figures largely, but who was the enemy? Napoleon's plan is defeated, but we find no mention of what that plan was. Finally, weariness overcomes industry, and we win the battle of Trafalgar, kill Nelson, and bury him in St. Paul's Cathedral on January 9, 1806, in ten untidy lines.

These difficulties must be anticipated and avoided. First, it must be recognized that collecting material is one kind of work, and using it in a composition is another. Special instruction and assistance should be given for the preliminary task. Before a pupil is sent to the library at all, some hints and practice should be given on taking notes from books (*e. g.*, their history or geography text-books)