

Some will doubtless inquire, can not the text book be made to teach the pupil, not only the principles of rhetoric, but also *how* to apply them in actual composition? Can it not, by minute personal directions, by examples, by exercises, make all this clear? But these minute directions will either fail to meet the peculiar wants of individual pupils, or will so cumber a text book with details, as to make it cumbrous, confused, impracticable. Besides, the larger number of those for whose guidance the examples are intended, either only half understand them, or take them altogether in an abstract way, and really fail to recognize them or their like anywhere else, especially in their own writing. It is often almost wonderful to see how generally the less mature and thoughtful class of pupils in rhetoric will turn from their text book to their own compositions, and become at once perfectly oblivious of properties, fallacies, figures, as if all these had now taken upon themselves a new and undistinguishable aspect; or as if an altogether new species of perception and insight were here needed for their detection, exposition or correction.

The truths, as in painting, music, elocution, indeed, every one of the arts of expression, so in composition, every practical rule or fact, must be exemplified to the pupil, and by the pupil in his own experimental exercises. Only as he actually does the thing himself, does he really discover *how* he was to do it, or fully comprehend *what* he was to do? For example, he may have learned from the book, that he should select practical subjects instead of abstract ones; but he will only learn how to obey the rule by having to choose subjects for himself. The book may tell him how to determine and arrange the topics involved in his subject; he will only learn how to do it, by repeatedly attempting to analyze his own subjects. The book may give him rules for the proper construction of his sentences; but only from the actual construction of sentences in continuous composition, will he really learn how to do it, or gain the power to do it intelligently.

The conclusion of the whole matter then is this: The pupil may gain an important knowledge of the theory of rhetoric from the text-book. But for that purpose, he does not want a diffuse, platitudinous four hundred page "course in rhetoric and composition," containing something of everything—capitals, punctuation, false syntax, taste, beauty, sublimity, wit, humor, figures, styles, with an after deluge of examples, exercises, extracts, themes in solid columns, and models in indefinite variation and dilution. We want rather a brief hand book, itself a model of searching analysis, systematic order, shrewd philosophy, compact treatment, and faultless style, and such a book as he should master.

And for the rest—the practical art of composition—he wants the living teacher, the daily exercise, the desk, pen, ink and paper; the actual choosing and scanning of themes; the varied limitations of his subject; the thoughtful development of the topics; the careful expressing of his thoughts; the close personal scrutiny of his sentences, phrases, and words, and the nice after-study of his figures. And this must go on from day to day, under the stimulus, the guidance, the criticism of the teacher, until the pupil has completed, to the best of his power, a composition. And then comes another, and still another, until he has acquired such a practical comprehension and skill, as will warrant his being set at the work by himself, to produce one to be afterwards studied and criticised en masse, by the teacher and himself together. After this practice has been so continued as to show satisfactory results, he may be required to write, and to criticise, and revise his own work, and upon the direction of his teacher, perhaps repeatedly, before it is subjected to the final scrutiny of both sitting in combined and cooperative judgment upon it.

No provision is here made for the solitary correction of compositions by the teacher, with his pen and red ink, over the sanguinary traces of whose criticism the pupil is afterwards to intelligently wander, or vaguely dream, or angrily complain.

It is, in all elementary training in composition, but little better than baying at the moon or pouring liquor into a rat hole. As for a time, the pupil's practice in compositions is wholly blind and unintelligent, except as carried on under the very eye of the teacher; so for a corresponding period, are the teacher's criticisms wholly unintelligible and ineffective, except as they are orally explained and justified to the pupil in person.—*Rhode Island Schoolmaster.*

Preponderance of Female Teachers in the United-States.

It is generally admitted that women are naturally better fitted than men for the delicate work of teaching the younger pupils in our schools. It is almost as generally admitted that they are, as a rule, quite as successful as men are with the older children. Nevertheless, there is a very general popular indisposition to pay them, as teachers, in just proportion to the amount and value of the work they do. This is strikingly manifested in the following statistics, which we condense from an interesting paper lately published in the *Tribune*. The averages of monthly wages no doubt exaggerate the relative difference between the pay of the two classes, since the men, for the most part, occupy what are considered the higher positions, and consequently receive the greater pay. Yet, making due allowance for that, the discrepancy between the wages of male and female teachers is much too great to be consistent with justice. According to the last census, there were in the United States 150,241 teachers, of whom 100,000 were women. In some of the states the proportion of women teachers is still greater. In Massachusetts there are six times as many female teachers as males. In Vermont the proportion is five to one, and in Iowa three to one. In the large cities the preponderance of female teachers is most marked. In Chicago there are 24 men to 241 women; in Cincinnati, 60 to 324; in Milwaukee, 14 to 70. St. Louis has 18 to 166, San Francisco 25 to 183. In the eastern states the difference is increased: Boston has only 67 men to 565 women; Providence, 9 to 142; Brooklyn, 27 to 510; Philadelphia, 81 to 1,263; Baltimore, 42 to 335; and Washington, 4 to 56. Louisville has 29 male teachers to 103 women. In this city, in the year, 1860, three quarters of the public school teachers were women. In 1866 there were only 178 males out of over 2,000 teachers, and the relative numbers have since remained about the same. The cause of this remarkable disproportion is simply that teaching does not afford as good an opening for men as other occupations; and as people will always seek for the best attainable pay and employment, this field has almost been abandoned to women.—*N. Y. Teacher.*

Too Much Arithmetic.

The discussion on Higher Arithmetic at the meeting of the State Association in Zanesville in July, 1866, took me by surprise. It developed a unanimity of opinion in regard to arithmetical instruction, which was as unexpected as it was gratifying. My own convictions, that much more time was allotted to it than was consistent with the claims of other branches, had long been held and had often been expressed in conversation; but I was not prepared to find that so many others had reached the same conclusion. This opinion is not peculiar to Ohio. It comes to us now from various quarters. Earnest teachers are becoming greatly dissatisfied with the prominence given to arithmetic, and are giving utterance to their conviction that the school period can be made much more profitable than it is.

Let us look at the facts in our own State. According to the last report of the School Commissioner, the total number of pupils enrolled in the schools was 728,990. The report gives thirty-six branches of study, with the number of pupils attending to each. Omitting from the list the alphabet, reading, spelling, and writing, also composition, declamation, drawing, vocal music, map-drawing, and oral lessons, and also German, which was