

ENGLISH COMPOSITION  
          
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ENGLISH COMPOSITION

BY ALPHONSO G. NEWCOMER

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STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,  
LOS ANGELES, - CAL.



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## PREFACE.

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THIS book is intended primarily for use in high schools and academies. But, at the same time, it is issued in the confidence that it will be found suggestive and useful for the lower classes in colleges and universities, so long at least as our preparatory schools shall continue to send to them students practically untrained, or sadly mistrained, in this important branch of English. Grammar is faithfully taught the pupils through text-books, and they come with their heads full of theory, and hundreds of rules at their tongues' end, but they cannot write a single clear, smooth English sentence. Let them, at least once a week, devote a little time to putting these rules and theories into practice. No doubt one reason why this has not been done, is that so few text-books have been available which would relieve the teacher of the burden of finding appropriate themes, and of setting the pupils to work in the right direction. That is what this book aims to do. It is not intended to take the place of a Rhetoric, much less of a Grammar. There is not a formal rule in it, though numerous apposite suggestions are made, and certain fundamental principles are everywhere kept in view. The best results will be obtained by using the book to supplement some more technical grammatical and rhetorical treatise, such as

Mrs. S. E. H. Lockwood's excellent and comprehensive *Lessons in English* published by Messrs. Ginn & Co.

The object is to show the student, first of all, how simple a thing it is to find material; and, secondly, how easy and delightful it is to work that material into good, interesting compositions. Each exercise deals with some particular kind of composition. Specimen subjects and themes are given, followed by observations and suggestions in regard to the manner of treating them. Of course, everything cannot be provided for at once, and the pupil must be left for a while to keep out of error as best he can. Indeed, even if it were possible, it is a question whether it would be best always to warn the student beforehand, for sad experience is admittedly the most effectual of teachers.

Lastly, models are furnished of the various kinds of composition, sometimes taken from writers of recognized merit, often selected or adapted from work actually produced by students. The latter feature of the plan has been ventured upon because experience has shown that it is useless to set as a model before the average pupil a description from Ruskin, for example, or an essay of De Quincey. There is such a thing as aiming too high, as the ludicrously wild flight of many a young writer's eagle-feathered shaft has proved. If the models are within his reach, if he can hope to equal or even excel them, he will obtain from them not only profit but an encouragement that is worth more than any false or over-wrought inspiration. The study of higher models seems desirable only in proportion as the student is able to appreciate them. References therefore are often made to examples of this class, in the

hope that those who have the taste and the ability will resort to them with profit.

Reading up beforehand is by no means advised in every case. And yet there seems to be little warrant for the objections to this practice sometimes advanced of late. The early work of nearly every great writer shows clearly that he began by conscious, if not deliberate, imitation. Still, it will be apparent from even a hasty glance into this book that style is not considered the all-important thing; it is the subject-matter of models and references that has in most cases led to their selection, even translations being admitted.

After all else is done, one thing remains for the teacher—the criticism of the pupil's work. Therefore, mechanical faults and minor individual vices of style are not discussed herein. They are as numerous and as diverse as are the individual writers. Often, too, they are not matters of absolute right or wrong. Many adventitious considerations, which cannot be foreseen here, must go to settle the question.

The exercises, seventy-three in number, will furnish material for from one to four years' work, according to circumstances. They contemplate productions ranging from the simplest narration to the loftiest description, from clear, straightforward exposition to ingenious argument and eloquent persuasion. It is readily seen that exercises of this kind are not necessarily limited to pupils of any particular age or grade. In fact, the same subject which you set a ten-year old boy or girl at work upon may not be unworthy of the best effort of a literary master. Each must deal with it according to his ability.

The author's thanks are due to his collaborators in the English department of the Leland Stanford Junior University, some of whose suggestions have been used with profit in the lecture-room, and have naturally been incorporated here. Professor Genung's Rhetoric has furnished a partial basis for the arrangement and terminology, and not improbably some of the matter, of Part II.

The work owes its inception to the kindly encouragement of Mr. E. H. Woodruff, librarian of the above-named university, and formerly a very successful instructor in English at Cornell. Unfortunately, however, some of the best portions of his method could not be embodied in a work which, while aiming at a certain completeness, is after all confessedly elementary.

PALO ALTO, CAL., April 18, 1893.

PART I.

Composition Based on Experience  
and Observation.





## Introductory: How to Find Material.

---

“WHAT shall I write about?” is the immediate exclamation of every one who is required to write a composition. It is an important question and cannot be answered briefly.

But first let us give a few cautions. In selecting subjects for compositions avoid in general those which are too broad and comprehensive for concise treatment; those which are difficult and abstruse, requiring the knowledge and accuracy of one long trained in methods of scientific investigation, or the authority of a matured and logical thinker; those which have been worn out by the use and abuse of successive generations of essay-writers; those which can have no living interest for your readers or hearers; those which draw upon no personal experience, or appeal to no knowledge or taste of your own.

Thus, avoid abstract subjects, such as Patience, Perseverance, Idleness, Duty, Character, True Manhood and Womanhood, and the old triad, Faith, Hope, and Charity. You can scarcely expect to say anything new upon these topics, or even to say anything old in a new way; all the changes have been rung upon them long ago. Life and the world offer too much that is new and attractive, for us to be wasting our time on these outworn themes. Do not allow yourself to be discouraged

by the oft-repeated statement that we can find nothing new to say. That is the cloak which the dullard and the drone use to cover up their own incompetence and indolence. *We can* say something new. In one sense Nature never repeats herself. Her laws, her methods of operation, may be unchangeable always, but her products are infinitely diversified. Every day brings to light some new form, some hitherto unbelhelt combination. The same thing is true in other spheres — of social, political, and religious institutions. Keep your eyes and ears open. See and hear; then think and write.

Avoid old maxims and adages. Such are, Honesty is the Best Policy, Time and Tide Wait for No Man, Well Begun is Half Done, A Bird in the Hand, etc. Writing on such themes leads to the habit of making random and sweeping general statements which, because they are founded upon no scientific demonstration, are worse than worthless. Besides, these old sayings often contain more poetry than truth. If you can detect and expose fallacies in them, they may be made to furnish material for argumentative essays. Only be careful that you rightly understand the spirit of the sayings and are competent to grapple with the problem involved.

Avoid subjects in which the words must be taken in some figurative or unusual sense. The device is an old one, still cherished by many good writers. But it adds no grace to the composition, while it leads to misconceptions on the part of the reader and fosters in the writer habits of loose and aimless thinking. This form of title too is often only another way of expressing the abstractions which have been objected to above. Familiar examples of this class of subjects are, Crown

Jewels, Sowing the Wind, Stemming the Tide, Sunken Reefs, Links, Stepping Stones, Growing toward the Light. If you must preach or moralize, seek more effective methods. It may be doubted whether these fancies and pretty conceits, seeking to draw a moral lesson from every curious fact and phenomenon in nature, ever yet convinced the skeptical or determined the wavering.

Then there are whole classes of subjects that have about them a delightful indefiniteness which seems to fascinate young writers. A Pyramid of Vanities; Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow; Two Builders; Magic; Good Soil; A Little While; etc., etc. There is the wonderfully broad subject, Life: write what you please, it will fit here; though no two thoughts may have a common bearing, though no two sentences may fit together, they will all seem to harmonize with the title and the writer is content. But is the reader content? Read such an essay that has been written by some one else and judge for yourself.

Do you ask now what you shall select? Consider a moment. First of all, you want to *interest your reader*. Your real object may be higher than this—it may be to instruct, or to convince, or to arouse. But whatever be your object, if you do not interest first you will meet with small success. To interest keenly it is absolutely indispensable that you be interested yourself. The slightest weariness or indifference on your part will be detected at once and beget a corresponding weariness or indifference on the part of your reader. What are you interested in most? What is there all about you, in your books, in your school, in your home,

in the duties and pleasures and sorrows of your daily experience, that makes life so little or so much worth living? Write about this.

And yet use your judgment even here. You may be deeply interested in something, and may write of it most sympathetically and entertainingly and still fail to entertain. You read for the first time the thrilling story of how Trojan Paris carried off the beautiful Greek Helen, and how the Greeks went in revenge and besieged the city of Troy for ten years, until they razed it to the ground. You are fired at once with a generous zeal to rewrite this tale for your friends to enjoy as well as yourself. But they evince little interest, and you are disappointed. Soon you learn that they had all heard this story long ago. It was not that you did not write well—you made a mistake, that is all. You very naturally supposed that everybody else was as ignorant about this as you had been all along, that what was new to you would be new to them also. You investigate the matter further. You find that the story is thousands of years old, that it has been a stock part of the education of many generations of imaginative youth, that it has furnished themes for some of the world's grandest literature. You wonder about this, and try to trace this vast effect back to so apparently insignificant a cause. You examine the historical side of the legend, and you find faith here and doubt there and contradiction everywhere. One man thinks he has discovered the tomb of Agamemnon, and claims with still better reason that he has unearthed the ruins of Troy itself. You write again. Your readers are interested

this time, and you feel that your work has not been in vain.

What then is interesting to the reader? That which is *new* to him. It may almost be said that we spend our lives in the search after novelty—new truth, new power, new beauty. Not always that which is absolutely new—that which is relatively new will suffice. It may be found in books, in history, in legend, in speculation. Still better for the young investigator it may be found elsewhere. We have said that the world is full of new things—very simple many of them are too—which if we only sharpen our senses a little we shall discover. Perhaps it is because they are so simple, that we overlook them so often or fail to appreciate them. When you were tramping through the woods last Saturday you found growing wild in an out-of-the-way spot a great bed of white violets. What a discovery! You had seen these beautiful flowers tenderly cultivated in your aunt's garden, but you never dreamed that they were to be found growing wild so near your own home. Why, you can write a delightful account of this and your schoolmates will be far more interested in it than they would in any essay on plants carefully written up out of botanics and encyclopedias, or in any sentimental rhapsodizing over flowers in general. Leave the first kind of writing to specialists in this field of natural science, and the second to the poets. Not that all emotional expression is to be discouraged. By no means. Only let it be spontaneous, genuine, and not carried to excess. And on the other hand, if you care more for the scientific aspect of things, there is no reason why you cannot do

original investigation, and so find material for original writing. Instead of copying from others, simply record what you have seen yourself.

Late in the evening of that same Saturday, as you were trudging wearily homeward with your bunch of white violets, you stopped by the edge of the marsh to listen to the concert of the frogs. You were reminded of the story of the Irishman who was belated under somewhat similar circumstances. He was anxious to find the shortest way home, you know, and when a mischievous little frog down in the slough spoke up in a high-keyed voice telling him to "cut across, cut across, cut across," he somewhat hesitatingly ventured. He was getting deeper and deeper in the mire with every step however when one old croaker came to his rescue with the sage advice, delivered in a stately orotund, to "go round about, go round about, go round about." Travelers in Greece assert that in the Thessalian marshes to-day may be heard the same strange chorus, Brekkekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax, brekkekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax, which we know Aristophanes heard two thousand years ago. Now your frogs doubtless were neither Greek nor Hibernian, but they spoke none the less distinctly. What did they say? Could you catch it exactly? Could you reproduce it, even approximately? It might be worth your while to try. Aristophanes caught and reproduced so well the croak of his native frogs that that line of outlandish Greek stands to-day as one of the monuments to his genius.

But you live in the city? and you cannot go on Saturday tramps finding wood-flowers and listening to

frog-concerts? Very well. How many sparrows flew up from the curbstone this morning when you turned the corner into Elm Street? You could not count them, of course, but you could make a rough estimate. Perhaps some of them did not fly up, they are such bold creatures—none of your timid wild-birds that will not let you get within gun-shot of them. Now find out how widely distributed these English sparrows are. You will hardly find that in books: you will have to ask some one who has been in Boston and New Orleans and San Francisco. You will then get a good general idea of the entire number of these birds to be found in the country at present. Next, find out when they were introduced here from Europe, and compute the rate of increase. Why do they thrive so here? Will this thing continue? Or is there a natural limit that prevents any particular form of animal or vegetable life from exterminating all other forms? If so, what is this natural limit and when is it reached? Well, we are getting into deep water, and we may not get out. But no matter. It is to be hoped you do not believe that asking questions is the special prerogative of fools. There are many questions that no fool was ever capable of asking. Indeed there is scarcely a better test of a man's intelligence than the sort of questions he asks. And so our questions may go unanswered. What then? We have at least had something to think about and to write about.

There was another thing you noticed this morning. The little green-painted flower-pot with its blooming geranium was not to be seen in its customary place on the window-sill of a certain house; and a carriage

that looked suspiciously like a doctor's was waiting before the door. Every morning for several weeks that pink geranium had greeted you, making a bright spot in the gloom of the narrow tenement-street. At noon when the sun beat in there pitilessly, the flower had disappeared. A few streets back there are houses with great conservatories filled with gorgeous tropical plants. A gardener works among them constantly. But these flowers you suspect are kept for show, and you have been more interested in the little geranium whose comings and goings gave evidence of loving care. Why, is it possible that you have ever sat for half an hour, scratching your head and gnawing the end of your pen-holder trying to think of "something to write about"?

If you have difficulty in finding something to write about, you may be sure it is because you have a wrong idea as to what constitutes a proper theme. Perhaps you think it should be something remote in time or place, some description of Greenland or story of the South Sea Islands, some event in the past, some theory, some prophecy of the future — something in short that you never have seen, that has scarcely ever occupied your thoughts at all, and that in consequence you know little or nothing about. If such be your idea it is not strange that you should have to puzzle a long time before lighting upon what seems to you a suitable subject. And then you will have to rack your brains a longer time to find something to write upon the subject, or else take refuge in what somebody else has written. Now "racking the brains" is a thing good enough in itself, only we do not want to have too much of it to



do at the outset. What we want to do first is to write. Then after a while we shall find that the expression of thought has grown comparatively so easy that we can devote nearly all our time and energy to the thought itself. Therefore do not seek too far for material. Be satisfied for the present with home-topics and home-thoughts. You are thinking about something perhaps every waking moment of your life. You talk fast enough too when you are among your companions, and without even a thought of its difficulty. It ought to be almost as easy to write ; and it is. You will find it so if you only write as you think and talk, taking the same subjects and treating them in much the same way. And you will find too that writing, far from being a task, is a real pleasure.

Is it something new that you want? The chances are just as good that you will find it right at home as elsewhere. A thousand aspiring, or, it may be, driven and desperate, young essayists have written upon the genius of Napoleon and the pleasures of hope and the blessings of civilization ; but ten to one nobody has ever yet written about your grandfather's barn with all its denizens from the calves in the basement to the pigeons in the roof, with its pulley-fork and grain chutes, its harness room and machinery sheds, and the inexhaustible resources for fun in its spacious carriage room and haymow on a rainy day. The loving and truthful touches which you are sure to give to descriptions of this character will be worth more than all the artificial glamor your fancy may throw over "cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces."

You have made a mistake at times, perhaps, in im-

agining that what was new to you would be new to others. But you make a greater mistake in taking it for granted that what is old and familiar to you will be so to everybody else. You walk through the streets of your native town or city and find it all too commonplace to furnish you a fitting theme. But you travel to a foreign country and visit its metropolis for the first time. Here everything is novel, from the paving of the streets to the architecture of the public buildings, from the signs over the shop-doors to the dress and manners of the clerk behind the counter. You are inspired to record your impressions and you fill your journal with graphic descriptions, and write long letters home. You would like to tell all the world of what you have seen and heard. But you fail to realize that there are thousands who have spent their lives in this city and who find no more inspiration here than you found in your native place. They would not be half so much interested in what you might write about it as in what you might write about your home. Realize this once and you go back with a sense of the rarity and importance of what you had all along called commonplace. Here at home you may not be able to write with quite the same keenness of interest, but you can make up for this by fidelity and sympathy. And once you fully feel that what is best known to yourself is least known to nearly everybody else, your interest will be aroused where it was never aroused before.

Again ; are you quite sure there is not something new, even for you, in these old familiar scenes? We allow things to grow old to us too soon in this world. Resolve every morning as you take your accustomed

route to school that you will see something new—something that you have not noticed before though it may have been there a long time. Rest assured you can find such things every day. And when looking for them has grown a habit, you will find yourself living as it were in another and most wonderful world. You want a subject for an essay; take “The Street I Live In.” Make a drawing of it first, what the surveyor calls a plot or plan. Locate the houses, the fences and gates, the walks, the trees. You will soon find it necessary to take a walk through the street in order to verify your plan; and before you are through you will conclude that you did not know half so much about your street as you thought you did. So it is with everything.

We shall find here, to be sure, a great difference in individuals. Some of us are naturally quick and accurate observers and calculators, others are not. Experiment on yourself. Try to recall the patterns of the carpets or rugs at home, the color of the paper on the wall of your bed-room. Can you give the dimensions of the room you are now occupying? the number of square rods or acres in your play-ground? the number of paces from the gate to the corner? Some of you will find that you can do these things with ease. Others of you will be surprised to find that you do not know positively whether your dearest friend's eyes are brown or blue, and whether Mr. So-and-So, whom you see every day, wears a moustache or not. It is truly astonishing to consider how little we see with our eyes open all the time.

There is another consideration. Nobody else ever heard with your ears or saw with your eyes. Might it

not be that, if you could look through another's eyes you would find the color of the grass to be, not green, but what you have always called blue? In other words, is it not possible that grass makes the same impression on another's optic nerves that the sky makes on yours, and that the sky makes a yet different impression on his? Of course we agree in calling the impression received from the same thing by the same name, and so there is no confusion. But who shall say whether these things are or are not thus? Perhaps we are living in very different worlds all the time and have never suspected it. Certain it is that some people are what we call color blind and have great difficulty in recognizing and distinguishing very pronounced and diverse colors. Certain it is, too, that if we could borrow our neighbor's eyes and ears we should see tints that we never saw before and hear sounds and harmonies that we never heard. If we but had the dog's keen sense of smell a practically new field of knowledge would be opened up to us. Beyond a doubt these individual and race differences exist. Therefore take these into account and write with the conviction that you have something new to say about the most commonplace objects in the world, because your senses have told you a different story about them from what ours have told each one of us.

Of course all this is not the art of writing. Merely an attempt is here made to give you a few hints upon the secret of finding material, so that you will never need to hesitate again for a subject. How to work this material into literature is another problem.

## SECTION I.—NARRATION.



### EXERCISE I.

#### INCIDENT.

The most of us find it easier to tell what a man does than to tell how he looks. It may seem strange that this should be so when we consider that a man's actions are continually varying while his appearance remains practically the same and gives plenty of opportunity for study. But it is so, none the less, as your own experience will soon show. We can tell a story readily enough as long as we are dealing with actions and events, but if it becomes necessary to describe the scenes or characters, we hesitate as before a difficult problem. We shall not stop now to inquire into the reason of this. Suffice it to note that we are usually more interested in actions and events than in mere objects or scenes. There is about the former an element of uncertainty and surprise; we seldom know just what to expect next and our attention is therefore kept on the alert. And whatever we are interested in witnessing we are likewise interested in hearing or telling about. Here then let us begin.

Select from your past experience any incident that had for the time being an interest of its own, no matter how trivial. Be assured that anything which

survives in your memory and which suggests itself to you now derives from some source sufficient importance to make it worth relating. Nor is it necessary for you to trouble yourself about the source of that importance. Tell in a simple and straightforward manner just what occurred, what you did or what you saw done, without any additions or exaggerations. But first, after you have selected the occurrence to be related, fix upon an appropriate title. Our general subject is "An Incident," but this is rather too indefinite to serve any purpose besides that of a figure-head, and should be resorted to only when you can find nothing that is at once short and appropriate and more specific. The following are given as examples of

*Particular Subjects:*

A Severe Lesson.	The Interrupted Sermon.
One Way to Cross a Muddy Street.	Trapping a Mouse.
Catching a Tartar.	Well Merited.
Nature's Revenge.	A Surprised Jap.
How I Missed the Train.	A Practical Joke.
A Meadow Lark's Bravery.	Arrival of the Mail.
My Predicament.	How I Lost My Breakfast.
An Unexpected Meeting.	Caught by the Tide.

---

It is not likely that any of these subjects will suit the incident you have in mind. Indeed some of them have no meaning except in connection with the particular incident related. They are offered merely as examples of suitable and attractive titles. They have

been selected from subjects actually written upon and will give some hint as to the variety of material that may be used.

## EXERCISE II.

### SIMPLE INCIDENT.

If you have followed implicitly the few directions given in the preceding exercise and have caught the spirit of the suggestions, the essay you have written may be called an example of *simple narration*. That is to say, it deals almost exclusively with actions and events, with things that take place in succession in a certain order, and that consume *time*, no matter how little or how much, in their occurrence. Further, in your essay there are, or should be, no embellishments; leave such things for later work. No irrelevant facts should be given, no unnecessary words should be used. If what you have written shows in any of these respects a deviation from what was desired, rewrite it, adhering as closely as possible to facts and making use of the simplest and most natural language at your command. If you feel that you have already done this as faithfully as you can, take the following skeleton instead and write out in full the incident suggested by it:

Boat — shore — boy — prow — calculate — leap — recoil — precipitated — water.

Tell the story either in the first person or in the third, from the standpoint of the chief actor or from

that of an eye-witness. As the incident is purely imaginary you will have great freedom in the choice of minor details but will be met by the difficulty of telling them precisely as they might actually happen. Your object will be to make the incident seem entirely real and lifelike, to arouse and hold the reader's interest. Therefore picture to yourself the occurrence as vividly as you can. Then tell it naturally, in the past tense and indicative mode, and with no hint of anything fictitious about it.

The following may be studied as a model of this kind of composition. Do not assume that all the models here given are perfect or even excellent of their kind. Many of them are simply good specimens of work that has been done by students. It may well be that you can produce better.

#### ALMOST A RUNAWAY.

As I was passing the post-office yesterday morning a sudden gust of wind caught the corner of my cloak and sent it flapping out wildly behind me. A horse standing by the pavement took fright at the noise and the bright color of the cloak-lining. He wheeled around abruptly, overturning the buggy to which he was harnessed and throwing out its sole occupant, a little boy! I was very much alarmed when I saw that the boy held on to the lines as the horse started to run, and that he and the vehicle were being dragged along dangerously close to each other. Fortunately, at this juncture, a man sprang forward, and seizing the horse by the bridle before he had fairly started, succeeded in checking and quieting him. Little damage had been done. The boy got up, scared but unhurt. I drew my offending garment closer about me and passed on.



## EXERCISE III.

## COLORED INCIDENT.

Thus far we have endeavored to confine ourselves to the plainest kind of narration, to the faithful and straightforward relation of real or imaginary occurrences. Read again the model given in Exercise II. Notice how entirely devoid it is of anything foreign to the subject or of anything in the nature of ornament. Every word is necessary, and you feel that every word is true. The writer depends solely upon the inherent interestingness of the story to arouse the interest of the reader. In two places only—in the adverb *wildly* and the adjective *offending*—is there the slightest approach toward anything extraneous. But even these words, apart from their ornamental office, convey ideas that cannot well be omitted. Now compare with that selection the following :

## A DUDE'S DISCOMFITURE.

It was at the Southern Pacific Depot. We were sitting in a car of an outbound suburban train, looking out of the window, waiting for the train's departure. A young fellow, whose dress proclaimed him a "dude," came sauntering down the depot platform, watching the people who were descending from a train that had just arrived. Three girls, talking and laughing merrily together, seemed to absorb his attention. As he passed by he turned his head to watch them, when he was suddenly brought to a standstill by coming into collision with one of the pillars of the arcade. A particularly merry laugh from the girls just then, who may or may not have seen him, made him flush hotly. He glanced up at our car. We at least had seen him, and the row of smiling faces that filled the windows from one end of the car

to the other was not comforting. He hurried away, doubtless reflecting that this is an unsympathetic world.

Here again the writer has told his story for the most part very simply and naturally. But, if you will observe carefully, there is something here that has been inserted not so much for accurate representation as for effect. The climax is heightened and colored just a little, and at the end a bit of gratuitous speculation contributes to a more graceful close. The difference may be compared to the difference produced by the retouching of a photograph. It is just such touches as these that make a part of the difference between the great mass of writing and that portion of it which usually goes by the name of literature.

Now rewrite your last essay — the incident developed from the skeleton given in Exercise II. — introducing as easily and skillfully as you can, a few of these touches.

#### M O D E L.

##### A CRUISE.

The other day Will, Fred, Tom, and myself, were out for a ramble in the woods when we came upon a small pond on the bank of which was a raft. It did not take us long to decide that we wanted a ride, and so all four of us stepped aboard and shoved off. Will stood in the "bow" and directed the course of the craft, while the rest of us poled her along from the stern.

The pond was full of reeds and high grass, and was nowhere more than four feet deep. Here and there were old, moss-covered logs or little mounds protruding above the surface of the water.

After poling around in the deepest parts for some time, we decided to go for a cruise entirely around the pond. At one end we found a place where it was very difficult to navigate on account of the shallowness of the water and the great number of

logs. This place we named the Northwest Passage. After much trouble we succeeded in getting through and were going along at good speed when suddenly we struck a stone which our pilot had not seen because it did not reach to the surface. The sudden shock threw Will off, and as there were now three of us on one side and the balancing weight was removed from the other, the raft tipped and we also fell in.

We waded ashore with all possible speed but were afraid to go home in such a plight. Fortunately we had some matches which were not wet, and, having built a fire and sat around it for several hours drying off, we set out for home where we arrived just in time for dinner.

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## EXERCISE IV.

### EMBELLISHED INCIDENT.

When we spoke of faithful and accurate narration as distinguished from a somewhat ornamental style of writing, we did not mean to imply that the latter wanders from fidelity or accuracy. By no means. Such a wandering would, under ordinary circumstances, be quite inexcusable. But there are always very many things which, while perfectly true or existent, are yet not at all essential to the understanding of the incident. For example, in the case of the first incident cited here, "Almost a Runaway," it may have been entirely true that the horse was black, that the buggy was new, that the cloak-lining was scarlet, that the gentleman who caught the horse was lame. But, while the introduction of these facts would have given us a more accurate picture of this particular incident, it would not have helped our understanding of what took place, of the incident itself. In so far, then, these facts are extra-

neous and unnecessary. Of course we may use them if we like, for they have an office of their own. But even here we must draw a distinction; they are not equally available. Admiration of the gentleman's deed would be increased by the knowledge that he performed it in spite of some physical disadvantage. We could imagine the horse's fright more readily if we knew the color of the cloak-lining to be scarlet, because this is a violent color and more exciting than a tamer one. We can even conceive how our interest might be slightly increased if we were told that the buggy was new, because the magnitude of the damage would in that case be increased. But can you imagine any purpose that would be served by telling us the horse was black? It is surely not to be supposed that black horses take fright any more easily than those of any other color, or that they are any more dangerous when they do.

Not every fact then may be introduced simply because it is a fact. If it does not assist to a clearer understanding of the narrative, it must have some other justification for its insertion. This justification we find in a vital, active relation between it and the main facts of the narrative, which contributes to the interest and effectiveness of the whole.

Consider for a moment again the other selection, "A Dude's Discomfiture." The information in regard to the young man's dress is wholly unnecessary; is it likewise ineffective? No; for we are less ready to sympathize with one whose consideration for externals betrays a lack of depth in his nature. The knowledge here given us helps us to enjoy more unreservedly the humor of the situation. And so fully has the writer

appreciated this that he has even ventured to incorporate in his title this unessential feature of the incident.

The matter stands simply thus : That which is essential we must use ; that which is effective only we may use ; all else we had better omit.

Select another incident—your daily life is so full of them that you can never exhaust subjects of this class—and write it out with such fullness of detail and such unessential touches as your judgment shall dictate.

The following selection, taken from *How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar*, by Bret Harte, shows what can be done in the way of embellishing a narrative by a master of the literary art. If any portions seem unnatural or overwrought, it must be remembered that this is only a fragment of the story ; the portion which precedes fully prepares the reader for everything that is given here. "Dick" takes a wild ride of fifty miles the night before Christmas to bring some presents to a sick boy. His object is to reach the "Old Man's" cabin before dawn.

The storm had cleared away, the air was brisk and cold, the outlines of adjacent landmarks were distinct, but it was half past four before Dick reached the meeting-house and the crossing of the county road. To avoid the rising grade he had taken a longer and more circuitous road, in whose viscid mud Jovita sank fetlock deep at every bound. It was a poor preparation for a steady ascent of five miles more ; but Jovita, gathering her legs under her, took it with her usual blind, unreasoning fury, and a half hour later reached the long level that led to Rattlesnake Creek. Another half hour would bring him to the creek. He threw the reins lightly upon the neck of the mare, chirruped to her, and began to sing.

Suddenly Jovita shied with a bound that would have unseated a less practised rider. Hanging to her rein was a figure that had

leaped from the bank, and at the same time from the road before her arose a shadowy horse and rider. "Throw up your hands!" commanded the second apparition, with an oath.

Dick felt the mare tremble, quiver, and apparently sink under him. He knew what it meant, and was prepared.

"Stand aside, Jack Simpson. I know you, you thief! Let me pass, or"—

He did not finish the sentence. Jovita rose straight in the air with a terrific bound, throwing the figure from her bit with a single shake of her vicious head, and charged with deadly malevolence down on the impediment before her. An oath, a pistol-shot, horse and highwayman rolled over in the road, and the next moment Jovita was a hundred yards away. But the good right arm of her rider, shattered by a bullet, dropped helplessly at his side.

Without slackening his speed he shifted the reins to his left hand. But a few moments later he was obliged to halt and tighten the saddle-girths that had slipped in the onset. This in his crippled condition took some time. He had no fear of pursuit, but, looking up, he saw that the eastern stars were already paling, and that the distant peaks had lost their ghostly whiteness, and now stood out blackly against a lighter sky. Day was upon him. Then completely absorbed in a single idea, he forgot the pain of his wound, and, mounting again, dashed on towards Rattlesnake Creek. But now Jovita's breath came broken by gasps, Dick reeled in the saddle, and brighter and brighter grew the sky.

Ride, Richard; run, Jovita; linger, O day!

For the last few rods there was a roaring in his ears. Was it exhaustion from a loss of blood, or what? He was dazed and giddy as he swept down the hill, and did not recognize his surroundings. Had he taken the wrong road, or was this Rattlesnake Creek?

It was. But the brawling creek he had swum a few hours before had risen, more than doubled its volume, and now rolled a swift and resistless river between him and Rattlesnake Hill. For the first time that night Richard's heart sank within him. The river, the mountain, the quickening east, swam before his eyes. He shut them to recover his self-control. In that brief interval,

by some fantastic mental process, the little room at Simpson's Bar and the figures of the sleeping father and son rose upon him. He opened his eyes wildly, cast off his coat, pistol, boots, and saddle, bound his precious pack tightly to his shoulders, grasped the bare flanks of Jovita with his bared knees, and with a shout dashed into the yellow water. A cry rose from the opposite bank as the head of a man and horse struggled for a few moments against the battling current, and then were swept away amidst uprooted trees and whirling driftwood.

The Old Man started and woke. The fire on the hearth was dead, the candle in the outer room flickering in its socket, and somebody was rapping at the door. He opened it, but fell back with a cry before the dripping, half-naked figure that reeled against the doorpost. . . .

"Tell him," said Dick, with a weak little laugh, — "tell him Sandy Claus has come."

And even so, bedraggled, ragged, unshaven and unshorn, with one arm hanging helplessly at his side, Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar, and fell fainting on the first threshold. The Christmas dawn came slowly after, touching the remoter peaks with the rosy warmth of ineffable love. And it looked so tenderly on Simpson's Bar that the whole mountain, as if caught in a generous action, blushed to the skies.

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## EXERCISE V.

### INCIDENT FROM SCHOOL LIFE.

#### *Subjects :*

A School-room Episode.	Novel Result of an Old Trick.
A Lesson in Courtesy.	Master versus Pupil.
"Choosing Up."	Two Ends to a String.
The Ninth Inning.	Minnie's Freak.
The Patron of the Waste-Basket.	A Mouse's Surprise.

Here we have simply narrowed the choice of subjects to a field with which you are all equally well acquainted. It will be noticed that the first subject given is a rather general one, only somewhat narrower than the subject which stands at the head of the exercise. But even if you draw upon occurrences within the school-room for your incident, it will be well to devise for it a more particular title.

The question may be asked, Why select a title before writing, or why select one at all? It is true brief articles are sometimes printed in newspapers and elsewhere without titles. It is also true that the title of many a book has not been fixed upon until after the book was written. But the principle holds none the less good, Select your title first. No man can write coherently and effectively without having in his mind a definite idea of what he is writing about. And since language is the best means for crystallizing our ideas, for rendering them clear and definite, the sooner we put the subject of our thought into some formula of words, the better. This holds especially true in the more abstract themes which we shall take up later, for in them the temptation to wander from the main line of thought is peculiarly great. But even in the writing of an ordinary incident, the selection of a title beforehand, and the endeavor to keep that title clearly in mind throughout, will give a directness and unity to the composition that could not otherwise be obtained. It will occasionally be found necessary in the course of writing, to introduce certain things that were not contemplated at first, or to extend or abridge the treatment of a subject in accordance with the requirements of



time and space, and this may necessitate a modification of the title. But such things should be foreseen as far as possible in advance, for if they are not they invariably entail extra labor, or else work seriously to the detriment of the composition as a whole.

Very often there may be several available titles, almost or quite equally suitable. Exactness should in general be the leading consideration in deciding between them, although at times attractiveness may be allowed to outweigh this.

For the present work select anything that has happened to vary the ordinary routine of school duties, and proceed as in the last exercise. The following is given as an example :

#### JACK'S IGNOMINY.

"Been at it again, eh," thought Mr. Bates, looking up over his spectacles. The little, dirty, ragged figure of Jack came slowly into the office, the great whites of his eyes rolling in marked contrast to his intensely black face, so black indeed that it was void of the relief of shadows and could easily have been mistaken for the surface of a great India rubber ball. He came rubbing along the wall, picking the panels with his finger-nail, and at the planting of each foot glanced slyly and inquiringly at Mr. Bates. "What have you been doing now?" said Mr. Bates, sternly. Jack was very confident that his conduct had been reputable and proceeded, in his own excited dialect, to demonstrate his innocence; but as this was a daily occurrence Mr. Bates understood well how to weigh Jack's words.

Mr. Bates had arrived at the conclusion that it was hopeless further to attempt to arouse Jack by use of ruler or appeals to his conscience. He would experiment on other theories. Now Jack had a weakness. He esteemed his muscular powers very highly, and would hazard anything to prove to the boys his ability to accomplish any feat given. To his mind, failure in an attempt

meant disgrace. Mr. Bates thought to come at Jack's morals by way of his pride. He led Jack out to the corner of the main hall where all the children passed in and out. "Stand in that corner, sir!" said Mr. Bates. Jack obeyed. "Heels up close—raise your arms out this way" (illustrating by raising his own arms on a level in front). "Now stand there till I tell you to leave," said Mr. Bates, walking out to the center of the hall where he stopped and stood regarding Jack closely. Jack's eyes were not the only white spots on his face at this period; a row of pearly teeth came into view. He thought if that was his punishment he didn't mind so much. But his manner soon changed; he seemed to take a more serious view of the prospect. His face drew down, his head was pressed hard back against the wall, and his arms commenced to sink slowly to his sides, but on being reprehended by Mr. Bates he brought them to a level again.

Mr. Bates looked at his watch: one, — two, — three minutes passed, the gong struck, the doors flew open, and the children began to file out. Jack gave one hurried glance at the coming columns, then gritted his teeth. He must hold his hands steady now.

"Keep them up!" from Mr. Bates.

Beads of perspiration stood out on Jack's forehead, and at each succeeding renewed struggle to raise his arms his appearance became more comical. He saw his playmates endeavoring to suppress their laughter, and made one final effort to steady his arms, but they fell to his sides paralyzed. His disgrace had come. One mad lunge and he was out through the lines and away across the field, the peals of laughter from the children playing fainter and fainter on his ear. The experiment had proved successful.

That evening Jack was not seen with his accustomed associates, but went about alone, nodding to himself knowingly, and muttering, "Fool 'em one," as he stopped at each convenient corner and stood with his heels close together and arms extended.

C. W. H.

## EXERCISE VI.

## COMPLEX INCIDENT.

*Subjects :*

Fido and the Rabbits.

The "Awkward Squad" on Parade.

The Triple Play That Won the Game.

A Complicated Affair.

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So long as we confine ourselves to recounting the actions of one person, we meet with few difficulties. For ordinarily a person does but one thing at a time, and to give a faithful account of his actions we have only to relate them in the order of their doing, our chief disadvantage here lying in the fact that we cannot always relate events in as rapid succession as they occur. But our deeds seldom stand alone. Perhaps the great majority of our acts derive their interest and their significance not merely from their relation to what has preceded and to what shall follow, but also from their relation to something else, whether distant or close at hand, that is going on *at the same time*. Human life is a wonderfully, even terribly, intricate and complex affair. So here the writer is met at once by an insuperable difficulty. How shall he carry along together these diverse occurrences? While one man runs up the railroad track signaling wildly and another works desperately to close the broken switch, the train comes thundering down the grade with its engineer vainly endeavoring to operate the air-brake and its

passengers reading and talking unconcernedly inside. Here are half a dozen strands twisted into a single string. But words are not strands and cannot be twisted into strings; they are more like links, and can only be added, one at a time, and one after another, to form a continuous chain. You see the difficulty. We talk about the *thread* of a narrative, and the figure is better than we know. For, like most other threads, it usually consists of several strands. But it is simply impossible for the writer—the fabricator with words—to carry them along together. His material forbids that. He can only take up one strand at a time, carry it as far as he deems wise, and then leave it hanging there while he goes back after another. That is, he can only show us first a portion of this strand and then a portion of that, and tell us that they ought to be woven together, leaving it to our imagination to carry out the process. The result at best will be imperfect. But that should not discourage; it should only stimulate to greater effort. Where there are no problems, no difficulties, there is no incentive to work. If one man were to attain perfection, no man thereafter could hope to outdo him.

Relate an incident from life in which there were two or more prominent actors, bearing in mind the difficulties pointed out above and overcoming them as best you can. Notice in the following model the ingenious interweaving of the actions of three persons.

With that I tried to force my kinsman toward the black; but he felled me to the ground, burst from my grasp, leaving the shoulder of his jacket, and fled up the hillside toward the top of Aros like a deer. I staggered to my feet again, bruised and some-

what stunned ; the negro had paused in surprise, perhaps in terror, some half-way between me and the wreck ; my uncle was already far away, bounding from rock to rock ; and I thus found myself torn for a time between two duties. But I judged, and I pray Heaven that I judged rightly, in favor of the poor wretch upon the sands ; his misfortune was at least not plainly of his own creation ; it was one, besides, that I could certainly relieve ; and I had begun by that time to regard my uncle as an incurable and dismal lunatic. I advanced accordingly toward the black, who now awaited my approach with folded arms, like one prepared for either destiny. As I came nearer, he reached forth his hand with a great gesture, such as I had seen from the pulpit, and spoke to me in something of a pulpit voice, but not a word was comprehensible. I tried him first in English, then in Gaelic ; both in vain ; so that it was clear we must rely upon the tongue of looks and gestures. Thereupon I signed to him to follow me, which he did readily and with a grave obeisance like a fallen king ; all the while there had come no shade of alteration in his face, neither of anxiety while he was still waiting, nor of relief now that he was reassured ; if he were a slave, as I supposed, I could not but judge he must have fallen from some high place in his own country, and fallen as he was. I could not but admire his bearing. As we passed the grave, I paused and raised my hands and eyes to heaven in token of respect and sorrow for the dead ; and he, as if in answer, bowed low and spread his hands abroad ; it was a strange motion, but done like a thing of common custom ; and I suppose it was ceremonial in the land from which he came. At the same time he pointed to my uncle, whom we could just see perched upon a knoll, and touched his head to indicate that he was mad. — From *The Merry Men*, by Robert Louis Stevenson.

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## EXERCISE VII.

### COMPLEX INCIDENT, REVISED.

We used an illustration in the last exercise and the sentence ran thus : “ While one man runs up the rail-

road track signaling wildly and another works desperately to close the broken switch, the train comes thundering down the grade with its engineer vainly endeavoring to operate the air-brake, and its passengers reading and talking unconcernedly inside." Here is an attempt to present four or five simultaneous actions. As a matter of fact they are presented, not together, but in succession — the only way possible with words. But they are given rapidly, they are crowded into one sentence, and the very first word of that sentence warns the reader that the action is complex and that he must hold the successive portions of the picture in mind until the whole is completed. This is one device — a conventional way of overcoming the difficulty. In narration of this kind we are compelled to use a great many such words and phrases as these: *while, meanwhile, in the meantime, just then, simultaneously, a moment before*, etc. Participles also may often be used to advantage, but you will need to handle this device with great care, for perhaps in the use of no other one form of speech is the young writer so likely to betray his inexperience. Avoid such expressions as, "Let us now return to the chief actor in this scene;" "We must now ask the reader to imagine himself," etc. They are too formal to suit the taste of the present day. Every transition from one stage of the action to another, whether backward or forward, should be made with the utmost smoothness and naturalness. Your object should be always to carry the reader with you, to make everything so clear that he cannot possibly fail to follow, but at the same time to do this so skillfully that he will scarcely be aware of the transition.

Examine your last essay carefully and critically. Rewrite it and see if, with the help of the above suggestions, you cannot improve upon it. Form the habit of criticising your own work dispassionately and unsparingly. And if you care anything for literary finish or even for mere accuracy, form the habit of rewriting, again and again if need be. It is all very well to talk about the "first inspired utterances of a full mind." We do not learn to write, any more than we learn to talk, by inspiration. It takes long and laborious practice. We find our encouragement in the fact that in time it may become almost as much a mechanical matter to write in a correct and pleasing style as it is to form the written characters themselves.

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## EXERCISE VIII.

### GAMES OF SKILL, ETC.

A little consideration will show that we are gradually getting beyond the domain of pure narration. A war-correspondent who, from some commanding height, watches the progress of a battle and writes up an account of it for the newspapers, is said to describe the battle. This is partly due to the fact that we use the word *describe* somewhat loosely—no more loosely however than its derivation warrants—and partly to the fact that there is here a real distinction. The reporter writes, not merely what is done, but what he sees done. He strives to reproduce for others a mental picture of what he has actually before his eyes. And the action is very complex. A hundred things are going on at

once, so that in a certain sense they occupy space as well as time. An officer or soldier down in the lines would be conscious chiefly of a succession of events. After the battle he could narrate his experience, but it would be a very different account from that of the reporter on the height. Thus it comes that narration from an outside point of view is frequently termed description.

Taking this outside point of view write an account of some game you have witnessed — baseball, football, lawn tennis, croquet, anything with which you are familiar. It will be better, if you have an opportunity, to go and watch a game with this object in view. You can then make note of the most interesting points and be sure too of making an accurate report. You will of course need to understand the game well, and to have at your command all the technical terms used in it. The following account of a game of baseball is taken from the San Francisco *Examiner*, May 19, 1892:

#### WON IN ONE INNING.

##### CENTRAL LEAGUE TEAMS PLAY LIVELY BALL AT OAKLAND.

There was a large crowd over at the Oakland grounds yesterday afternoon at the Central California League game between the Morans of Oakland and the Haverlys of San Francisco.

The Oakland team started off with a rush, getting two men around the paths. But here their share of the run-getting stopped.

The Haverlys made one in the first and then drew blanks until the sixth, when they tied up the score. In the seventh they commenced hitting the ball hard, and before they quit five earned runs had been sent over the rubber.

The playing of the old-timers was lively and full of ginger. "Pop" Swett was sick and his place was filled by Stevens, who



caught Grant in good shape. The tall sycamore of the Mission pitched like a man driving spikes and had more speed than a thoroughbred colt, retiring eleven men on strikes. His control was almost perfect, not a man going down the path on a walk except "Josh" Reilly, who caught one of the big pitcher's in-shoots in the side and is sorry for it. Grant also hit hard and fielded his position finely. Jack Smith, old pioneer Jack, hit hard and played first base just as well as he ever did. Fudger, the man who once pitched for Stockton, made his reappearance after having been reported dead in half a dozen different sections of the country, and played a good game in right field.

For the Morans Nolan pitched good ball. Dunn played a superb game at second and Stultz handled some difficult chances at short. All in all the old-timers made it extremely pleasant and interesting for the spectators, and held the large crowd until the finish. The score: Haverlys, 7; Morans, 2.

Since baseball has taken such a firm hold on the affections of the American people, the newspapers daily give elaborate accounts of the most important games. Naturally reporters vie with one another in their endeavors to make these accounts lively and interesting. Where the same kind of subject is treated day after day, variety in style and language must above all be sought for. The result is that, in addition to the regular technical terms of the game, new ones have been invented by the score and will continue to be invented. Fantastic turns of expression, local allusions, ridiculous figures and tropes, and slang, are all employed freely. Popular taste alone—not always the best by any means—is consulted and catered to. But in our work we shall avoid these extravagances, since our chief objects just now are clearness of thought and purity of language, though of course novelty and originality of expression are always to be encouraged.

## EXERCISE IX.

## PHYSICAL CONTESTS.

In the last exercise we dealt with a class of games to write an account of which required a certain intimate and technical knowledge. The written accounts too were intended only for those who possess a similar knowledge. The average newspaper report of a ball game is the merest jargon to an uninitiated reader. To "write up" these games in a way that shall be interesting to the general reader is indeed a difficult task, for after all details are eliminated and all technicalities suppressed, little remains. There is, however, a class of contests, less complex in their regulations and issues, which admit of being described in general terms and which appeal to the understanding and interest of all alike. Such are almost all simple trials of strength, endurance, speed, or agility. Everyone is interested in the description of the chariot race in *Ben Hur*, though few have witnessed such a contest. A foot race, horse race, boat race, or any one of the contests of an athletic club's field day, will furnish good material for work of this kind.

## MODEL.

Louis Doucet and Captain Cortes met face to face and crossed swords near the middle of the little street. The Spaniard knew his man. Pauline's cry of recognition a while ago had told him who was the swift-footed and handsome young leader of the French detachment. As for Doucet he knew nothing more than that an enemy worthy of his steel was before him. A voice that he had heard a few moments before had seemed to him to utter his name with a sweet tenderness that recalled in some strange way the homesickness of his first year of absence from France.

It was no time for gentle reflections now ; the voice could not really have called him, he thought, and the mere flash of *nostalgie* passed as quickly as it came. His sword rang sharp and clear on that of Cortes. The two men glared at each other, the concentrated hatred of years of war burning in their faces.

They were well matched in every way. Cortes was a trifle the taller, but Doucet appeared rather more compactly built than his adversary. Both were sufficiently heated by their previous exertion to make their blood swift and their muscles ready.

No time was lost ; the fight was desperate from the beginning, neither combatant at first thinking of anything but rushing upon and bearing down the other. Both, however, discovered very soon that it was necessary to have a care for self-defence as well as for attack. They fenced furiously and adroitly, neither giving an inch, utterly forgetful of what was going on around them, their whole souls focused, so to speak, in the one desire to kill, and, by killing, to live.

Cortes was aware that Pauline was near by and probably looking on. The thought in some way nerved him powerfully. She should not see Louis Doucet vanquish him ; he would show her that a Spaniard for once was superior to a Frenchman.

Doucet had no such extra stimulus, but his was an iron frame and his courage and coolness needed no aid when a Spaniard dared cross weapons with him. With the dexterity drawn from long practice, and with the fierce fury of young tigers thirsting for each other's blood, they struggled back and forth and round and round, while their companions, fighting quite as madly, swept on down the street leaving them to occupy the already corpse-cumbered and blood-stained ground. In those days soldiers of the better class knew the use of the sword and were over-proud of the knowledge. Under the excitement and exhilaration of a hand-to-hand combat the accomplished swordsman always feels that his strength is doubled ; but the peculiar circumstances attending the struggle between Cortes and Doucet added immeasurably to this feeling.

Each found the other an antagonist whose vigor and swiftness made every moment a crisis and whose steadfast gaze caught in advance every motion of wrist or body.

Both men became aware presently that the cannonading had ceased and that the rattle of musketry was no longer heard. A great calm had fallen after the storm—the battle was over and the Spanish, to the number of eighteen hundred, had surrendered themselves prisoners of war.

One Spaniard, however, was not yet conquered; one Frenchman was still battling for victory.—From *In Love's Hands*, by Maurice Thompson.

For additional examples read the following :

The Chariot Race. *Ben Hur*; book v, chapter xiv.—Gen. Lew Wallace.

The Tournament of Prince John. *Ivanhoe*; chapter vii.—Sir Walter Scott.

The Boat Race. *Tom Brown at Oxford*; chapter xiii.—Thomas Hughes.

Christian's Fight with Apollyon. *Pilgrim's Progress*; Fourth Stage.—John Bunyan.

The Duel. *The Two Captains*; chapter xviii.—Baron de la Motte Fouqué.

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The example here given and those referred to, dealing as they do with events so far removed from ordinary experience, will do little more than help one catch the spirit of this kind of work. But if they do that much it will be an ample return for the time spent in reading them. Of course a simple incident attracting only a mild interest will have to be treated with befitting simplicity. Any attempt to attach to it, by an inflated style of writing, an importance it does not possess, is certain to result in failure.

## EXERCISE X.

## INTELLECTUAL CONTESTS.

Give an account now of a contest of a somewhat different kind—one involving the exhibition, not of physical prowess, but rather of intellectual ability and attainments. Perhaps spelling and pronouncing matches, being of common occurrence, will most readily suggest themselves. Joint meetings of literary societies, debates, suits and trials at law, and contests in declamation and oratory, if you have an opportunity of hearing them, will afford yet wider scope for an exercise of this nature. Read *The Debate* in Will Carleton's *Farm Festivals*.

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## EXERCISE XI.

## OUTLINE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

The length of the composition to be written must be determined by various considerations, chiefly by the subject itself and the writer's knowledge of it. In general, write all that seems worthy of being said upon the subject, neither more nor less. It is sometimes necessary for a writer, as in the preparation of lectures, magazine articles, and newspaper reports, to fix his limits exactly beforehand. But that can be done successfully only when by long training one has obtained perfect control over his pen. In order therefore to obtain this control it may be well occasionally to practice writing compositions of a definite length. In every case the qualities to be sought for are unity, symmetry,

compactness, and completeness. Mere length is in itself no indication whatever of merit, nor even of the amount of time or labor spent on the work. A student once presented an essay of only four sentences, which in all the qualities above named was excelled by no one of a hundred other essays presented at the same time. It possessed in a rare degree that almost indefinable virtue, literary finish. When you read it you felt that everything had been said and had been said in the best possible manner. One word more or one word less would have spoiled it.

Naturally one whose aim is excellence only does not want to be hampered by any conditions in the matter of length. It is possible to expand or condense a written article within certain limits without serious harm; but the limits are very narrow. Of the two processes expansion is the more hazardous. Indeed, so far as mere use of words goes, writers of every grade err ten times on the side of excess to once on the side of deficiency. So true is this that we have several familiar names by which to characterize different forms of the first vice — inflation, circumlocution, redundance, tautology, prolixity, diffuseness — but scarcely one for the second — rhetorical ellipsis. Condensation, “boiling down,” is therefore recommended to young writers as a valuable practice. So long as the process is applied to the diction or wording of any thought there can be little question of its value. A review of what we have written will almost always show to us some expressions that add too little to warrant their retention, and some that are mere repetitions and add nothing at all. And sometimes the thought itself may be pruned to ad-

vantage. On the other hand, if expansion is necessary, it must always be effected by the addition of thought, of subject-matter, not by juggling with words.

Write a brief history of your life. There are a few facts that are necessary to every work of this kind, no matter how brief or incomplete it may be. In addition to these, relate the most important events and especially those events which, whether they appeared important or not at the time of their occurrence, gained significance by their effect upon your subsequent life. Such an essay is not likely to have complete unity, since it will be made up largely of diverse and unrelated experiences — experiences that have fallen to the lot of a single individual, it is true, but quite as often by chance as by design. Still a certain unity will be secured if you continually bear in mind that all these experiences have contributed to make you what you now are.

The opening chapter of *Robinson Crusoe* furnishes an excellent example of such a sketch of one's early life. Observe how it gives, in addition to those facts which are patent to every one, considerable insight into young Robinson's character and proclivities, which is not only interesting but really essential. Read also *The Author's Account of Himself*, in Washington Irving's *Sketch-Book*.

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## EXERCISE XII.

### DETAILED AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Instead of trying to cover your whole life-history, take a small portion of it only and treat it more in de-

tail, as if you were writing a chapter of a complete formal autobiography. You will thus have time and space to make note of minuter incidents, to inquire, if you choose, into the motives of actions, to indicate personal tastes and follow the development of particular traits of character. Perhaps some of this could be better done by another than by yourself, still there is no reason why you should not attempt it. Try to be fair to yourself, erring if at all on the side of modesty. So far as may be, let motives shine through your actions rather than rest on your bare assertion. You will be more likely thus to win the reader's confidence and impress him with your sincerity.

The familiar Autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin, John B. Gough, Joseph Jefferson, etc., may be referred to as models.

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### EXERCISE XIII.

#### IMAGINARY AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

There is a subject that has long been a favorite with young composition-writers—"The Autobiography of a Cent." It is an easy subject for several reasons. Being largely if not entirely fictitious it does not require any preliminary investigation into facts. It affords ample scope for the imagination, and yet in a wholly familiar field—everyday life. The use of the first person too instead of the third, seems to lead to the most natural and easy style of writing. If the title were changed to "The History of a Cent," and the third person used, the narrative would be likely to lose,



not only in simplicity, but also in liveliness and interest.

Select such an "autobiography" and write it in your best imaginative style. By *imaginative* is not meant anything strained or artificial. On the contrary, the best imaginative writer in this case will be he who best succeeds in identifying himself with the object in question. Imagine yourself to be that object, as vividly as you can, and then, with all the feeling and naturalness possible to you, tell your story.

Of course many things may be substituted for the word cent in the above title—*pin, ribbon, pen-knife, horse-shoe, postage-stamp*. A description of the manufacture of these articles will not properly enter into a narration; rather dwell upon the wanderings of the object, the various uses it has subserved, the vicissitudes of fortune it has witnessed and suffered—in short, all its experiences and observations in the world of men and things. One of the most successful essays of this nature that has come under the writer's observation was entitled "A Voice from the Belfry." The school-bell did all the talking, and the school-bell you must admit is in an admirable position to observe certain interesting phases of human life.

There is no need to confine yourself to inanimate objects. The autobiography of a squirrel or a dog or horse may be made perhaps more interesting than any of the above. Somewhat in this style is a well written plea for the horse, entitled *Black Beauty*, by Anna Sewell. If you prefer, instead of writing a composition of your own, take *A Bell's Biography*, in Hawthorne's *Snow Image, and Other Twice Told Tales*, and

rewrite it in the form of an autobiography with the bell as speaker.

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## EXERCISE XIV.

### BIOGRAPHY.

Biography is a province of letters to which many authors of talent in all ages have devoted themselves. It differs from autobiography in that it is the life-history of one man written by another. *Plutarch's Lives* have exerted an incalculable influence over many generations of enthusiastic youth and are read still with scarcely diminished interest. The *Memoirs* of old French writers and their imitators are filled with biographical material. From England we have, to mention only one striking example out of hundreds, Boswell's monumental *Life of Johnson*. And the American press of the present day has given us a large number of brief biographies of varying degrees of excellence in the "Statesmen" series and "Men of Letters" series. Short sketches may be found in any Encyclopedia or Biographical Dictionary. Perhaps the most helpful examples will be found in Hawthorne's *Biographical Stories*, a collection of six short biographies of Sir Isaac Newton, Queen Christina, etc. Anecdotes are liberally interspersed to make the narrative as lively as possible.

To write such works as the most of those mentioned above requires time, talent, earnestness, and a full and definite knowledge of facts. Nevertheless such writing may with advantage be practiced on a small scale. After learning all the facts you can, write a short biography of one of your relatives or friends.

## EXERCISE XV.

## HISTORY.

To the historian falls the necessity of practicing the art of narration in all its branches and in its utmost complexity. He should have a lively imagination, a quick perception, a keen sympathy, and a calm, unerring judgment. He should be the ideal spectator of human activity, able to look upon the life of an individual as a mere incident in the life of a society or nation, and the life of a society or nation as a mere incident in the progress of the world. He may be likened to the reporter on the height watching the battle and sifting, judging, recording. From the height of the present he looks calmly down over the panorama of the past; or from the height of impartiality he surveys and chronicles the events of the present. He must see and distinguish clearly all the multicolored threads of the tangled skein and — not unravel them, for above all else must he picture to us things as they are; but he must be able to lay his finger at one point and say, "Here the thread enters the tangle," and lay it at another point and say, "Here it emerges again." But the ends of the thread no man sees.

Still much of the historian's work requires no more skill than may be obtained in the practice of ordinary narration. He gathers his facts from every accessible source and then selects, arranges, and classifies them according to whatever seems to him the best principle. It will be easy enough for you to get an insight into this process and at the same time gain a little practical

experience. Read in two or three histories of the United States the account of some particular event, as the Landing of the Pilgrims, the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Battle of Lookout Mountain; then, from your memory and with only such recurrence to the sources of information as may be necessary to assist your memory and verify facts, write an independent account of the same event. Let the language, and indeed everything except the bare, indisputable facts, be as far as possible your own.

Or perhaps you can get not unworthy material near at hand. "Our Class Election," "The Late Rebellion in the Third Ward School," "The Diplomacy of Briggs, Arbitrator," are suggestive subjects of this kind. Treated with all the dignity of actual history they can be made extremely interesting and effective.

## SECTION II.—DESCRIPTION.

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### EXERCISE XVI.

#### MANUFACTURED ARTICLES.

*Subjects :*

A Revolving Book-case.	A Hanging Lamp.
An Ornamental Waste-basket.	My Mineral Cabinet.
The School Benches of Our Grand- father's Time Compared with Those of Our Own.	Novel Card Receiver.
An Ideal Office Desk.	Aunt's Cuckoo Clock.
	A Postage Stamp Album.

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We enter here upon work of a very different nature from that which we have been doing. We must deal now with objects as they exist in space and present themselves, complete and unchanging, to our senses. It may seem at first a very simple matter to represent in language an object which is presented to us thus unchanging for an indefinite length of time. But there are many difficulties, some of which have already been hinted at. Our vocabulary with its wonderful wealth of resources can serve only very imperfectly for the portrayal of the infinite variety of objects with which we are surrounded, and so the writer is largely dependent on the knowledge and imagination of the reader. Consider this, too: All the colors of the rainbow strike the eye at the same moment; the several

notes of a chord combine for the ear into one musical sound; the roundness, smoothness, and softness of a rubber ball give to the touch an instantaneous pleasurable sensation. But language must be content to present the separate elements of these complex impressions one at a time. If memory did not come to the reader's assistance and hold for him the separate elements until he has received them all, he could never get a complete picture through the medium of words. Language is evidently, from its very nature, far better adapted to narrating events which occur in succession than to describing objects all of whose parts have a contemporaneous existence. Other difficulties will come to notice as we proceed. We shall simply have to rely on our ingenuity to devise ways of lessening or overcoming them. It is difficulties to be overcome as well as effects to be sought that make of composition an art in itself with a full body of principles — laws and licenses and limitations.

As an example of simple description take the following from Nathaniel Hawthorne :

#### GRANDFATHER'S CHAIR.

The chair in which Grandfather sat was made of oak, which had grown dark with age, but had been rubbed and polished till it shone as bright as mahogany. It was very large and heavy and had a back that rose high above Grandfather's white head. This back was curiously carved in open work, so as to represent flowers, and foliage, and other devices, which the children had often gazed at, but could never understand what they meant. On the very tip-top of the chair, over the head of Grandfather himself, was a likeness of a lion's head, which had such a savage grin that you would almost expect to hear it growl and snarl.

The children had seen Grandfather sitting in this chair ever

since they could remember anything. Perhaps the younger of them supposed that he and the chair had come into the world together, and that both had always been as old as they were now. At this time, however, it happened to be the fashion for ladies to adorn their drawing-rooms with the oldest and oddest chairs that could be found. It seemed to cousin Clara that, if these ladies could have seen Grandfather's old chair, they would have thought it worth all the rest together. She wondered if it were not even older than Grandfather himself, and longed to know all about its history.

In the above selection the first paragraph is purely descriptive; the second is only indirectly so, being a fanciful way of dwelling upon the age and antique appearance of the chair.

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### EXERCISE XVII.

#### MECHANICAL CONTRIVANCES, SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS, ETC.

In the last exercise we handled description in a very general way. There was no attempt to make it exhaustive. Striking features alone were selected, and those perhaps from only one, external point of view. Here the problem is somewhat different. Have the object before you, then try to make your description of it so accurate and complete that any one may get a reasonably clear conception of it, even though he has never seen it. This will necessitate finding distinctive names for the various portions of the object. Such names do not always exist; or if they do, unless we happen to be very well acquainted with the object and its use, they do not readily suggest themselves to us. Notice what frequent use an awkward describer makes

of the words *thing, piece, affair, contrivance*, etc., — words that have no specific meaning and scarcely help the description along at all, since their value for conveying definite ideas is virtually *nil*. Notice too how such a describer, if he is talking, makes use of any article that may be at hand to illustrate his meaning. If he is at the dinner table, knife and fork, cup and saucer, salt-cellar and tooth-picks, will all be pressed into service to make up for the deficiencies of language.

Indeed in description of the kind here contemplated, a knowledge of technical terms is almost indispensable. For instance, if you have to describe an air-pump, it will simplify the matter very much if you can use, without further explanation, such terms as *cylinder, piston, valve*. To describe one of the more complex kinds of steam engines or electrical dynamos, requires great familiarity with the terminology of mechanics. But whatever your own knowledge may be, you will still have to take into consideration the ability of your readers or hearers to understand. If they have not your acquaintance with these technical terms, then both they and you must be content with such imperfect conceptions as are to be derived from general terms which are more widely intelligible though necessarily less exact. Even when both writer and reader have an intimate knowledge of the exact terms, and description reaches its highest perfection, still drawings and photographs are almost indispensable adjuncts. Witness any book or magazine devoted to the special sciences.

There are certain terms, once considered technical perhaps, which to-day should constitute a part of everyone's vocabulary, whether he be specially educated or



not. *Lever, cog, pivot, lens*, may be instanced. Familiarize yourself with such as early as possible; it will make you a more intelligent listener and reader and a more intelligible talker and writer in every department of modern life.

The following are suggested as good objects to be described: A Needle Threader, Carpet Stretcher, Scroll Saw, Bicycle, Violin, Steam Engine, Air Pump, Refracting Telescope, Compound Microscope. Many others will readily occur to you.

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## EXERCISE XVIII.

### BUILDINGS, TOWNS, ETC.

*Subjects:*

My Home.	The Woolen Mills.
Grandfather's Ranch.	The Whaleback Steamer.
My Birthplace.	The Garden City.
The Old Schoolhouse.	A New England Hamlet.
The City Waterworks System.	

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We must recognize two fundamentally different classes of descriptive writing. Roughly speaking we may call the one Scientific, the other Literary. The first aims to give an exact picture of things as they are, the second aims to give a good picture of things as they appear to be. The object of the first is to explain and inform, the object of the second is to interest and please. The first may be compared to a photograph, the second to a more or less idealized painting.

In Exercise XVI. the descriptions were not limited to either kind, though they would probably be rather of the former than of the latter. Naturally many descriptions will partake of the characteristics of both classes. In Exercise XVII. they were strictly of the scientific class. In the present exercise again they will not be limited to either class, though they will lean toward the literary.

Much depends on the subject selected. If you choose a factory or a new schoolhouse, you can do little more than give a detailed description of the building. The subject lends itself only to the plainest kind of treatment. An architect could give a strictly "scientific" description; one without his knowledge and experience would have to be content with something less exact. On the other hand, if you choose to describe your home or the old schoolhouse in which you have spent many years, a thousand memories and associations will conspire to brighten up the sombre tints and soften the harsh lines and lend beauty and grace to the homeliest features. You can hardly keep your personality from entering into and idealizing such a description. Nor will you be expected to do so. This is one of the characteristics of our best genuine literature. It is not meant that you shall be inaccurate or untruthful, only that you shall not be over-curious for accuracy, and in particular that you shall not strive, to the exclusion of better things, for absolute completeness of detail.

The descriptions may well be made from memory, without having the object before you. Read as an example Hawthorne's description of *The Old Manse*. In the following model, though the language and con-

struction are not always the best that might be chosen, the expression is sincere and the feeling that inspired it was evidently genuine.

#### A CABIN.

All day we followed a dark winding path which leads into the interior of Wāhkiakūm County, Washington, with scarcely a gleam of sunlight. At last, while descending one side of a gulch, there opened to us a striking scene.

In the woods below us was a clearing, surrounded by a wall of dense evergreens. At the bottom of the gulch trickled a stream of sweet mountain water. In the opening on the opposite side of the stream was a bed of grass. Here and there were old moss-covered logs and brush piles.

Then, as our eyes followed the path which led up the opposite bank, we caught sight of a small cabin which seemed to be standing out from the side of the hill. It was made of boards which had been manufactured without a sawmill, and the eaves came to the ground so that it looked like a potato house. Above it towered some gigantic firs which with swaying branches threatened to fall on the little cabin and bury it.

As we approached we saw that the cabin had been recently deserted, and we inferred from the axes and saws which were scattered here and there that the desertion had been a hasty one. The loneliness told the story. Perhaps the rancher came into the woods to seek a fortune and went out to seek a wife.

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### EXERCISE XIX.

#### PROCESSES OF MANUFACTURE AND CONSTRUCTION.

##### *Subjects:*

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| How to Make a Willow Whistle ; | Through the United States     |
| a Floral Design ; a Kite ; a   | Mint.                         |
| Photograph Receiver.           | An Improvised Hammock.        |
| A Home-Made Aquarium.          | How to Put Up a Swing.        |
| A Successful Rabbit Trap.      | A Visit to the Watch Factory. |
| How Pasteboard Boxes are Made. |                               |

We have seen that there are kinds of narrative composition that partake more or less of the nature of description. Here we have a species of descriptive composition that borders on narration. Here action and time are again conspicuous elements, only it is action producing a complex, material result. If we deal primarily with the actors, or makers, our composition seems to be essentially narrative; if we deal primarily with the things acted upon, or made, then it is essentially descriptive. But it is of little use to endeavor always to keep the terms distinct. These considerations will merely help to fix the fundamental distinction. The laws of discourse and the characteristics of style are not limited to this or that kind of composition. Clearness, Force, and Beauty, have as much place in one kind as in another. One, as another, may be interesting or dull, sublime or ridiculous, humorous or pathetic.

To tell how an article is made will often necessitate describing its various parts, but this in turn will probably make it unnecessary to describe the article as a finished whole; that will have been done well enough already. Indeed it is a very common resource in describing an object to tell how portions of it were constructed, and if you look over the descriptions you have written you will probably find instances of this.

Models of this kind of writing will be of little service. If you know how to make the article yourself you have only to seek the best words and simplest formulas by which to give a clear explanation of the process to another. Clearness is the one thing to be sought,

and the test of excellence will be the ability of the reader to make such an article from your description alone.

However it is often desirable to describe certain unusual processes, or the construction of unfamiliar objects, not with any intention of enabling another to imitate the process, but simply for the purpose of affording instruction or entertainment and gratifying an almost universal curiosity to hear about that which is strange. The following is an example of such a description.

#### INDIAN BREAD MAKING.

Along toward sunset of a hot summer afternoon I sauntered down to the Indians' huts and watched two squaws on the bank of the river making acorn bread. They had set up some large willow boughs to protect them from the sun, and these formed an effective background for the ragged, dirty forms of the old squaws. By asking many questions I finally obtained from them the process of Indian bread making.

It takes two days, one to gather the acorns, a second to grind them and bake the meal. After the grinding, the flour is washed with sand and water in a water-tight basket, such as Indians always use, and is then allowed to stand until the sand has settled to the bottom. Next, the top is poured off into another basket and into this are thrust intensely hot stones, which cause the mixture to bubble and boil as though a fire were cooking it. After it has been boiled down to a thick paste it is set in the river to cool, and when cool enough to handle it is rolled into small loaves and again put into the river to harden.

The bread, as I saw it, was of a pinkish color and looked sufficiently tempting. I was repeatedly urged to taste it, but when I glanced at the squaws' hands I felt constrained to decline.

## EXERCISE XX.

## NATURAL OBJECTS. — THE MINERAL KINGDOM.

*Subjects :*

Building Stone.	Table Salt.
New England Granite.	Gold Mining.
Varieties of Marble.	Treasures from the Sandpit.
Mica.	Gems and Precious Stones.

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No doubt some knowledge of geology or mineralogy would contribute much toward giving an intrinsic value to descriptions of this class. But intrinsic value is not just now the one thing needful. We are writing English — writing it because we hope some day to write it well, very well, and because we know that every sentence we write, upon whatsoever subject, makes the next subject easier and better. We want practice too in the various fields of composition, scientific as well as literary.

Now if you have no special knowledge in this line, the attempt to write in it will subserve another end — it will help to give you that knowledge. It will spur you on and compel you to learn. But learn for yourself and by yourself; do your own investigating. Not only will this be vastly more profitable from every point of view, but it will be incomparably more interesting: you will find genuine pleasure in observing and recording; writing will be transformed from a drudgery to a delight.

The whole secret is this: Go to books, if you like, for your names, for your terminology — it is well for

us to observe uniformity in this respect — but *go to nature for your facts*. Write what you see, and it may even be that you will write something of intrinsic worth, for not everything has yet been seen. Write what you see for yourself: thus only will your work be interesting, thus only will it bear the impress of sincerity and conviction, and come to have authority among men.

The following outline is extracted from Bauerman's *Descriptive Mineralogy* and will suggest a method of procedure for the description of other minerals. Of course in writing an essay, this abbreviated catalogue style must not be used. Let every sentence be complete in itself and let them all be connected as smoothly as possible.

#### DIAMOND.

*Form and Structure.*—Crystals cubic; with brilliant faces; faces pitted; faces striated or curved; transparent, translucent. Lustre, adamantine. Colorless, or in tints of gray, yellow, brown, pink, or blue, the latter being the rarest. Refractive. Strong chromatic dispersion, causing a brilliant play of colors when faceted. Becomes positively electric by friction; often phosphorescent after exposure to sunlight.

*Composition.*—Carbon, with minute traces of foreign substances. Infusible.

*Occurrence and Distribution.*—Found in Brazil, the Ural, India, Australia, Borneo, and South Africa; the first and last localities, especially the latter, being the most productive at present. In South Africa the productive localities are the gravels of the Vaal and Orange rivers, and more particularly dykes or pipes of decomposing igneous rocks penetrating schists. These have now been worked several hundred feet below the surface without getting to undecomposed rock. The diamonds are found irregularly interspersed through it, and may be an original constituent, but

the general opinion of local investigators is that they have been derived from older rocks below.

The largest known diamond is said to be in Borneo, and to weight 367 carats or 1284 Troy grains. The Pitt, a cut brilliant, is of 136 carats. The Koh-i-Noor in the original oriental shape was 186, but has been reduced to a brilliant of 124 carats. Many large crystals have been discovered of late years in South Africa.

*Use.* — The chief use of diamond is for ornamental purposes, the crystals being reduced by cutting or grinding with diamond dust upon a lapidary's wheel to a double pyramidal form, unsymmetrical to the base, being pointed at one end, and with a large flat surface at the other, as in hemimorphic crystals. The pyramid is cut with the largest number of faces possible, to obtain a maximum of total reflecting surfaces; the stone is mounted with the flat surface uppermost. These are known as brilliants, and can only be obtained from well-shaped crystals. Those of less regular form are cut as roses, in which the surface is covered with triangular facets, and the thinnest twins or flat cleavage pieces are made into tables, having only a narrow band of facets on the sides. Diamonds that, from want of lustre or defects, cannot be cut, are called Bort. For glass-cutting the apex of an octahedral crystal is required, so as to have a solid point, a cleavage fragment or other splinter being only useful for writing or scratching.

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## EXERCISE XXI.

### GEOLOGICAL FORMATIONS.

#### *Subjects:*

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| A Fifty Foot Vertical Section<br>of Our Soil. | A Visit to the Stone Quarry. |
| Coal Deposits.                                | Washington County Fossils.   |
| Petrifaction.                                 | Systems of Crystallization.  |
| How Stones Grow.                              | Stalactites and Stalagmites. |



The object here again is to describe what takes place. The problem is analogous to that of Exercise XXIV., the difference being that here we deal with natural instead of artificial processes. Select a subject, if possible, upon which you can write partially at least from first-hand knowledge. Watch the processes of inorganic nature; examine snow crystals, watch the formation of ice, the erosion of rocks by the waters of a creek, the sedimentary deposits in the creek's bed. Or material may be obtained from simple experiments, such as suspending a string in a solution of sugar, as in the manufacture of rock-candy, or "crystallizing" grasses by dipping them in a solution of salt or alum. Then supplement your own knowledge by recourse to books on chemistry, mineralogy, and geology; for example, Bauerman's *Descriptive Mineralogy*, Dana's *Manual of Geology*, Shaler's *First Book in Geology*, Winchell's *Walks and Talks in the Geological Field*, *Sparks from a Geologist's Hammer*, *Geological Excursions*, and *Geological Studies*.

The following extract, from a chapter on the Application of the Observational Method in Teaching, in Alexander Winchell's *Shall We Teach Geology?* will afford many hints for the gathering of material for this kind of composition-writing. Professor Winchell supposes the student to be in "a quarry region, as at Potsdam, N. Y., Portland, Conn., Berea, O., Joliet, Ill."

You notice that the rocks which these workmen are quarrying lie in beds or layers. Each of these is a *stratum*. The separation between one stratum and another is generally a very narrow fissure or *joint*. Often, however, you find the joint filled with some other kind of material. This is a *seam*. Sometimes the seam is of an

earthy or clayey character. Sometimes one stratum is so closely joined to another that one can scarcely say there exists either seam or joint. Observe all this for yourself. Generally you find several strata in immediate succession much alike. Do you see them so here? Or do you find a decided contrast of two adjoining strata? In what does the contrast consist? Are they of different color? Of different fineness? Of different degrees of homogeneity, or likeness of substance from side to side? Can you detect any lines running along the broken edges of any of the strata? What are they due to? What renders them visible and distinguishable? These are lines of *lamination*. If we have a sandstone here, perhaps we shall find some laminae running obliquely across the broken edges of certain strata. This is *oblique lamination*. Look at some of these blocks which have been quarried; tell me which was the upper side. How does the upper differ from the lower side? Do these strata lie in a horizontal position? Does the upper surface present any inclination? What angle does it make with a horizontal plane? Is it five degrees? Is it twenty degrees? This angle is the *dip* of the stratum. Here is an angle of ninety degrees between this horizontal and this perpendicular line. Half of this is an angle of forty five-degrees; and half of this is an angle of twenty-two and one-half degrees. Represent such an angle. Represent an angle of eleven degrees. Toward what direction does this stratum dip? It is southwest, perhaps. Then the *strike* is northwest and southeast. How thick is this stratum? Measure it with a rule. How thick is the next one? Come to the wall of the quarry and measure its entire height. Sit down and make a sketch of this wall. Distinguish each stratum exactly as it is. Preserve their proportional thicknesses. Describe each stratum separately, beginning at the bottom. Let the strata be designated A, B, C, D, etc. In describing, give kind of rock, color, texture, solidity, purity or impurity, homogeneity or want of it, thickness. State which stratum is best adapted to the uses to which the stone is applied. As bearing on the uses, you may take a fragment home and weigh it in its natural condition—then weigh it after drying as completely as you have means for. If you have no balance, go to the apothecary, or omit this experiment. Then also with reference to use, you may observe whether

the stone wears away much on surfaces exposed to the weather. Does it *weather* smooth? Does it weather into concave depressions? Do fissures appear in it? Does it develop rusty specks or blotches? If so, these are probably caused by iron in it.

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## EXERCISE XXII.

### THE VEGETABLE WORLD. — FRUITS.

*Subjects :*

The Acorn.  
Cocoanut.

Orange.  
Pine-apple.

Blackberry.  
Watermelon.

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Many subjects will readily occur, any one of which will offer material for a description of considerable length. Keep in mind what is wanted, and keep in mind the injunction to rely on your own observation. Avoid the style and method that have been so prevalent in juvenile compositions of this class, in which the writer begins, "There are a great many kinds of apples, such as the Snow-apple, the Winesap, the Bellflower, etc.," and then wanders off in the second sentence to some statement about the uses of apples, and in the third to something entirely different still. Such compositions are mere collections of detached thoughts, without unity or symmetry, alike uninteresting and unprofitable. Remember that what we want now is chiefly description. And if you have chosen to describe an apple, what you want first is not pen and ink and paper but an apple, and, if you cannot break it, a knife to cut it. Then proceed in a methodical way. Note

the size, shape, and color; the smoothness, thickness, and toughness of the rind; the firmness, taste, and color of the pulp; the size of the core; the size and shape of the seeds, etc. Only by proceeding in this regular way can you convey a good idea of the thing described. And besides that it will help you very much in finding material. It will lessen the chances of omission, thus insuring a more exhaustive treatment of the subject. And as you proceed, one thing will suggest another: the color and size of the apple, for instance, will suggest its marketing value, the firmness of the flesh will suggest its keeping qualities, the taste will suggest its uses. An enumeration of varieties will naturally follow the description of a single variety, for then differences can be more clearly indicated. Here, too, method can still be observed: apples fall naturally into summer, autumn, and winter varieties; and it may be well to limit yourself to kinds found in your immediate neighborhood.

Certain botanical terms will be useful here, such as *pome*, *berry*, *pepo*, *nut*, *pod*, *akene*, *drupe*, *cone*. Some of these are common enough but are occasionally misapplied through ignorance of their exact meaning. Learn to distinguish between true fruits, such as those mentioned above, and those which are popularly called fruits but are not such in the strict botanical sense, as the strawberry.

In the directions given above, why were size, shape, and color mentioned first? Because they are the most obvious and striking features. By them we recognize at once that an apple is an apple and not a plum or a pear or an orange. By them too we are enabled either

to determine its specific variety or to limit it to several closely allied varieties. The principle is simply this: Select the most salient characteristics first; follow in description that order which you are obliged to follow in observation.

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## EXERCISE XXIII.

## FLOWERS.

*Subjects:*

The Violet.	The Flowers of Western New York.
Peach Blossoms.	My Favorite Flower.
The Wild Poppy.	Flowers as National Emblems.

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Though in nature's order flowers come before fruits, they are placed second here as being more difficult to describe. The first four of the above subjects will serve for scientific description, the last two for more general, sympathetic, and imaginative treatment. For the first you can make good use again of botanical terms, *calyx*, *sepal*, *corolla*, *petal*, *stamen*, *anther*, *pistil*, etc. With a microscope and a specimen before you, you could get at the facts without these names, but in writing a description it will be of advantage to use the same names that others use. Even without any knowledge whatever of botany you will be no worse off than the first botanists who had to study the plants and flowers themselves instead of books. We of a later day cannot affect to despise books: they are time-savers, short cuts to knowledge; they enable us to begin where our ances-

tors left off. But first-hand knowledge will always be most highly prized. The following is an example of a popular description of a flower, in which free use is none the less made of technical terminology :

#### THE TRAILING ARBUTUS.

The trailing arbutus, known in botanics as *Epigaea repens*, is the earliest, sweetest, and most charming of our native flowers. It is an evergreen creeping plant, found mostly in mountainous regions, in ravines and on northern slopes. The leaves are deep green, from one to two inches long and about half as broad as long, borne on short petioles covered with brownish hairs. Each branch bears several of these leaves near its extremity, and then terminates in a crowded spike-like cluster of exquisite waxy flowers, varying in color from white to rich rose, and emitting a delicious, aromatic fragrance.

The flowers are tubular, the tube being half an inch in length and the expanded flower about half an inch across. They are enclosed in a membranous calyx of five pointed sepals, which are half as long as the tube, and these sepals are in turn embraced by three hairy, brownish bracts, somewhat broader and shorter than the sepals. The tube of the flower is wider at the base than above the sepals, and is densely set inside with long, silky, white hairs. It encloses entirely the pistil and ten stamens. The anthers are attached at one end, and borne upright ; the seeds are small and numerous.

The buds are formed the previous season, and may be distinctly noticed in autumn. If the plants are lifted at that season and placed in a fernery kept in a cool room, as a partially heated bedroom, the buds will develop in February and yield their beauty and fragrance as freely as in their native haunts in spring. Left undisturbed where they grow, however, in the rich, sandy leaf-mould of a wooded northern slope, the buds are just ready to open on the approach of pleasant days, and may be found in perfection from the tenth of April till the first of May in the latitude of southern Pennsylvania. — *Ladies' Home Companion*.

## EXERCISE XXIV.

## PLANTS.

*Subjects:*

Water Lilies.	The Cactus.
Vegetable Parasites and Epiphytes.	Maize.
Geraniums.	Evergreens.
Ferns.	The Oak.
The Cotton Plant.	The Palm.

The term *plants* embraces the entire range of vegetable life from the gigantic forest tree to the moss that clings to its trunk and the toadstool that thrives beneath its shade. If the plant you select to write about bears flowers and fruit, some description of these will be necessary, though it will naturally not be so minute or exhaustive as if you were writing about them alone. Keep in mind your subject and observe throughout that symmetrical treatment which every subject demands. It would be manifestly absurd to devote half of an article on "The Chestnut" to a description of the leaves and half of it to a history of the tree, or one-fourth to general features and the remainder to the nut which the tree bears. Yet such absurdities are committed. A pupil has been known to write a six-page composition under the title of "The Maple," five pages of which were given up to an account of the manufacture of maple sugar. The composition was good enough in itself, but it needed re-christening. There was a manifest incongruity between the subject and the subject-matter. Keep in

sight the subject always, and then give each feature of the object described only that prominence which its importance warrants.

It may be best to begin with a description of the general appearance of the plant. The reader will be better satisfied if he has at the outset some sort of outline picture of the whole. Then proceed to details. Take up in succession, so far as the plant in question possesses these organs, root, stem, branches, foliage, flowers, fruit. General considerations will follow—varieties, uses, associations. If you are describing the oak, note its symbolism as illustrated in the derivation of our word *robust*; note too its connection with Dodonæan and Druidic rites. In like manner the palm has a symbolism of its own and will call up more than one scriptural and classical allusion. There is a saying among the Arabs that “the palm tree has three hundred and sixty uses.”

However, do not get the idea from what has been said that one particular order must always be followed. Such a practice would result in very mechanical, inflexible, monotonous composition. Many subjects will admit being treated in half a dozen orders, each of which has a defensible claim to the attribute of *natural*. Writers of genius may even depart from natural order altogether and still produce a happy effect. When you have thoroughly trained yourself in the systematic treatment of subjects so that the most intractable material will assume under your hands symmetry and just proportion, then you may more safely venture to strike out upon whatever lines your fancy suggests. Cultivated taste will have to be your guide.



## M O D E L.

## THE JUDAS-TREE.

Those who have traveled through the limestone districts of Pennsylvania during the early part of May, will remember with pleasure the beauty of the landscape. At that time the large trees of June-berry are a mass of white bloom, and every brake and thicket is richly decorated with the glowing red of the Judas-tree and the snowy flowers of the wild plum in pleasing contrast. All of these trees are desirable for ornamental planting, blooming as they do very early in the season, before the foliage has developed, and making a gorgeous display by the profusion of flowers which they never fail to produce. But the most lasting and pleasing of the three is the Judas-tree, or red-bud, botanically known as *Cercis Canadensis*.

This beautiful tree belongs to the great order *Leguminosæ*, which includes the black locust, the honey locust, the coffee-tree, and many other trees prized in ornamental gardening. The flower buds, which are clustered at the leaf axils along the stem, begin to swell at the dawn of spring, and in southern Pennsylvania are showing their color by the middle of April. They continue to develop in size and brilliancy for several weeks, and it is not until the middle of May that the banner-like petals are unfolded and the bud assumes a peculiar bird-like form. A dozen or more of these little flowers are found in each cluster, and by a little stretch of the imagination, they remind one of as many miniature humming-birds vying with each other for a share of the honey from some nectared flowers.

The trees are often found from twenty to thirty feet in height, with a branching, semi-globular top almost as many feet in diameter, supported by a trunk fifteen to twenty-five inches in circumference. In full bloom, such trees are a mass of soft crimson color, and may be seen across the landscape for miles.

As the flowers begin to fade, the rich, broad, green leaves expand, and clothe the tree with dense verdure, which furnishes a delightful shade the entire season. This is further intensified by the profusion of long, compressed green seed-pods which turn to a brownish red during autumn, and by their number and

length, as well as peculiar color, excite the curiosity and admiration of those who see the tree or enjoy its shade.

Propagation is easily effected by seeds, and the trees are easily transplanted and do well in the most exposed situations. With all these characteristics, it seems strange that the Judas-tree is not generally used for ornamental gardening.—*Ladies' Home Companion*.

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## EXERCISE XXV.

### PLANT GROWTH AND ACTIVITY.

*Subjects:*

Germination.	Plant Creepers and Climbers.
Budding and Grafting.	How Seeds are Scattered Abroad.
Endogens and Exogens.	The Sensitive Plant.
Tree Rings.	Venus's Fly-trap.
Rapid and Rank Growers.	

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Take half a dozen beans or grains of corn or other seed, and plant them in warm, moist earth. Examine one each day and from your examination describe as well as you can the process of growth. The more mysterious processes of change in organic structure, of cellular growth and multiplication, must of course be left for the microscope of the skilled botanist.

This is very plainly description though it assumes to deal with activity. We describe the plant as it appears at different stages of the activity, and that is about all. We see it before the change takes place, we see it again afterward, but just what that change consists in deeper than this external manifestation of it, is extremely difficult if not quite impossible to say.

There is to be noted in vegetable life much activity apart from mere growth, — movements that look toward self-defense, self-sustenance, self-preservation, — movements that exhibit many of the characteristics of animal instinct. This is one of the things that forbid us to draw a sharp line between the two kingdoms. The observation of these movements will furnish material for very interesting descriptions.

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## EXERCISE XXVI.

### ANIMALS.

#### *Subjects :*

Butterflies.	The King of Beasts :	Fabulous Animals.
The Humming Bird.	A Dispute between	Intelligence of Brutes.
Robin Redbreast.	the Elephant, the	Physical Character-
The Brook Trout.	Lion, and the	istics of a Good
My Pets.	Horse.	Trotting Horse.

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Any Natural History will furnish a wealth of information on these subjects. And various works of such authors as John Burroughs, Olive Thorne Miller, Maurice Thompson, and John B. Grant, may be consulted both for matter and for good examples of the way in which the matter should be treated. But do not consult these books first if you wish to get the maximum of profit from this exercise. Here, as always, observe for yourself. Half an hour spent before a cage of monkeys or a tank of fish, will be more fruitful than the reading of a chapter from any book. Go to books

to settle points that you have no means of settling for yourself, and to verify the results of your observation. Do not be disappointed to find them verified: the young investigator is sometimes apt to feel that way. Be encouraged rather, for while the verification does not detract in the least from the merit of your own discovery, it increases your confidence in your own powers.

It is not intended here that you shall dissect an animal and describe it down to the minutest details of its organism, although that may be done. But an abundance of subject-matter may be found apart from this. If you are interested in birds, note the varieties that are to be found in your neighborhood; the time of arrival and departure of the migratory ones; the respective sizes, and lengths of beaks, wings, legs, claws; the extremes of color variation in the same species; the notes or calls; the manner of running on the ground; the favorite resorts, food, etc. Speaking of bird-notes calls to mind a very interesting essay read before a class by a boy who had a good ear for music and a talent for whistling. He imitated so well the notes of half a dozen different birds that they were immediately recognized by his hearers. The same thing may be conveyed to readers, though in a more imperfect way, by the use of musical notation. See S. P. Cheney's *Wood Notes Wild*.

The numerous points just suggested would furnish too much matter for an ordinary composition. Either confine yourself to one species of animal, or to the comparison of different species in respect to some particular feature. For example, "Bird Beaks" would

of itself be a very comprehensive subject. The following description of the genus *Ursus* and the species *Ursus horribilis* are taken from *Cecil's Books of Natural History*, by Selim H. Peabody :

All the species of bears have great size, large limbs, and heavy gait. They walk upon the flat soles of their feet, and are, therefore, with the raccoons, called *plantigrades*. The print of the foot of a black bear, left in the soft earth, resembles very much the impression of a man's hand — fingers, thumb, and palm being distinctly marked. This form of foot takes away much of the swiftness which beasts of prey usually possess. The dog and cat families move upon their toes, or digits, and are called *digitigrades*.

Bears' feet have five toes, armed with large, strong claws, fit for digging and climbing, rather than for holding prey or tearing flesh. They eat a variety of food, and, besides flesh, are fond of nuts, acorns, berries, growing corn, and young grain.

They seldom attack man, unless driven by severe hunger, or provoked; but when angry, are very dangerous. They are not only savage, but solitary; making their lonely dens in the most secret and inaccessible places. In winter they sleep in their dens, in some cavern of the rocks, or in the hollow of some old tree. Here they pass months, without food, in a torpid state, breathing so gently and slowly that one would hardly suppose them alive. As the winter passes, their fat wastes away; until, when they crawl forth in the spring, they seem to have slept off all their flesh. . . .

The Grizzly Bear, *Ursus horribilis*, is the most powerful and dangerous wild beast of America. He is from six to nine feet long, and sometimes weighs as much as eight hundred pounds. His hair is longer and finer than that of the black bear, and the color varies from a grizzly gray to a light brown. The hair on the legs and feet is darker and shorter than that on the body; on the face it is so short and pale as to make the creature seem bald; on the neck it grows to a stiff, coarse mane.

The feet and claws are very large. The forefoot of a specimen measured by Lewis and Clarke, was nine inches broad, and was

armed with claws six inches long. These claws are not pointed, but are thin and wide, fitted to dig in the earth.

Notwithstanding his size, his unwieldy form, and his shambling gait, he runs with great speed, and his strength overcomes even that of the bison. The Indians regard him with superstitious awe, and make preparations to hunt him with many ceremonies. A necklace of bears' claws, which can be worn only by the brave who has himself killed the bear, is a mark of great valor, and entitles the wearer to peculiar honors. Since the Indian has learned to use the rifle, the risk is somewhat less than when he fought Bruin with arrows and spears; yet, with fire-arms, a steady hand and sure aim are necessary, for a wounded, angry bear is very dangerous. There can be no escape; life is staked against life.

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## EXERCISE XXVII.

### ANIMAL HABITS, ETC.

#### *Subjects:*

Insect Architecture.	Kittens at Play.
Bees at Work.	The Provident Squirrel.
Nest Building.	How Fish Swim.
Bird Migrations.	Fight between a Dog and a Snake.

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Do not feel restricted to the subjects given in these lists; they are offered merely as examples. If no one of them suits you, select something else, provided only that it be in the line of the general subject. In the present exercise it should deal with some phase of animal habits or animal activity. This is an interesting and almost inexhaustible field.

Have you sometimes wished to visit a foreign land where new customs and laws obtain, where the food and dress of the inhabitants, the art and commerce, the

implements of war and the regulations for peace, are all strange to you? It is easily done. Visit an ant-hill, a bee-hive, a bear-pit. Go out into the garden and overturn a stone, and see if you do not find there a most cosmopolitan community.

The following is an example of a short essay written from observation of this kind:

#### LILLIPUTIAN ENGINEERS.

While walking along a trail in the mountain one day, my attention was attracted by a community of red ants that were busily engaged about the little mound which arose above their underground dwelling. Evidently they had a difficult task before them, to judge from the way in which some of them kept running about, while a few others stood surveying a pebble the size of a small marble which lay dangerously close to the entrance in the top of the mound and which they seemed to want removed. Soon the engineers—for such I took those to be that were examining the pebble—seemed to have solved the problem, since all set busily to work excavating a ditch just beyond the pebble. When this was almost completed the last grains of sand that held the pebble were carefully removed by two of them, and it gave a partial roll. The same operation was performed again and again, and they would surely have completed their task alone, had I not given them a helping hand.

My theory was that the intelligent little creatures feared lest the pebble might cave in on them when they should tunnel out their upper compartments.

F. G. K.

Again we extract from *Cecil's Books of Natural History*:

#### HOW THE WASP MAKES HER NEST.

When quite a little boy, the writer used to go away alone into a closet to learn his lesson. The blinds at the only window in the room were always closed, giving barely light enough to read

when sitting on a stool beneath it. One spring day a wasp came between the blind and the glass, and after much buzzing and much walking about, began to build. She first laid down, beneath the under edge of the upper sash, a patch of paper about a third of an inch in diameter; then, standing on this, she raised cup-shaped edges all about her, increasing outward and downward, like the cup of an acorn, and then drawing together a little, until a little house was made just about the size and shape of a white-oak acorn, except that she left a hole in the bottom where she might go in and out.

Then she began at the top, and laid another cover of paper over the first, just as far away as the length of her legs made it easy for her to work. Now it was clear that she made the first shell as a frame or a scaffold on which she might stand to make the second. She would fly away, and after a few minutes come back, with nothing that could be seen, either in her feet or in her jaws. But she at once set to laying her paper-stuff, which came out of her mouth, upon the edge of the work she had made before. As she laid the material she walked backward, building and walking, until she had laid a patch a little more than an eighth of an inch wide and half or three-quarters of an inch long. When laid, the pulp looked like wet brown paper, which soon dried to an ashen gray, and still resembled coarse paper. As she laid the material, she occasionally went over it again, putting a little more here and there, in the thin places; generally the work was well done the first time.

So the work went on. The second paper shell was about as large as a pigeon's egg; then a third was made as large as a hen's egg; then another still larger. After a time the wasp seemed to go inside to get her material, and it appeared that she was taking down the first house and putting the paper upon the outside. If so, she did not bring out pieces and patch them together as a carpenter, saving of work, would do, but she chewed the paper up, and made fresh pulp of it, just as the first was made. Of course the boy did not open the window, for he was too curious to see the work go on, and then he was afraid of the sting. How large the nest grew he never learned, for he soon after left the school, and saw no more of it.



## EXERCISE XXVIII.

## NATURE AT REST.

*Subjects :*

View from My Window.	School-Girl's Glen.
High Noon on the Plains.	Yellowstone Park.
Eagle Lake by Moonlight.	A Winter Scene.
Mt. Shasta.	

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You must already have realized how difficult it is to arouse and hold the reader's interest by purely descriptive composition. Interest centers most naturally about life, — about the variety and uncertainty that are found wherever there are continual changes. In the description of inanimate or quiescent-objects these elements are lacking and the sources of interest must be sought elsewhere. Much can be trusted to the æsthetic sense, more or less developed in all of us, which finds pleasure, or it may be, its opposite, in the mere contemplation of form and color. But this sense will weary readily and the most exalted description which appeals to it alone may not safely be carried very far. Therefore brevity is to be sought.

Even the briefest description may be made extremely monotonous. This inevitably happens when it is a mere catalogue of details, strung together like beads on a string, without any grouping or organic connection between them. "Give each feature only that prominence which its importance warrants," was recommended a few pages back. It might be inferred from this that some features deserve more attention than others. And

so they do. Everything, from a leaf to a landscape, has its striking and distinguishing characteristics which must be seized upon and transmitted, first, last, and always. That individuality which nothing permanent loses in nature should not for a moment be lost in art. Subordinate, in spite of all temptation to the contrary, that which is manifestly subordinate. Is the view from your window charming? Discover, if you can, what particular elements in it make it so. Is it restful, or depressing, or inspiring, or sublime? Try above all to convey to your reader the impression that it is restful, or depressing. Beware of telling him bluntly that it is so; that were inartistic and ineffective. To assert again and again that a thing is beautiful, only tantalizes a reader. He can get little conception of beauty out of the word *beautiful*, and the little he gets may be entirely false. Give him the impression as nearly as you can in the way in which it was given to you. That is to say, reproduce the picture accurately for him and let it make its own impression.

#### MODEL.

#### MT. KENESAW.

The sun was slowly sinking beneath the gray line of mountains in the west. The ascent had been steep. Leo and I had been climbing rapidly, pausing only once or twice on the way up to breathe. The air of northern Georgia makes one equal to almost any task, however, and we were at last standing upon the summit which Sherman, twenty-seven years before, had striven so vainly to reach.

The only obstacle that Mt. Kenesaw had offered us was its own steep and rugged sides, and we now rested upon its huge, unguarded embankments, the silent witnesses once of that bloody struggle, and looked down at the scene of beauty and repose lying

at our feet. To the south stretches a valley marked here with broad fields of red clay, and there with forest growth clothed in the first green of spring. At the foot of the mountain lies the little village of Marietta. Hills and gray mountains give a wilder aspect to the north and east. Just beneath us, circling the mountain's verge, are the rifle pits where death leaping from a thousand fiery throats had met the Northern soldiers.

Everything remains just as it was left twenty-seven years ago. Minie-balls and shells still lie about the works, while now and then a cannon-ball is picked up.

Slowly the buzzards wheel overhead.

The sun's last rays linger upon the peak, giving a fond good-night, and then silently vanish.

The cool of evening begins to settle around. Gently the wind stirs the trees in the cemetery on the hill where ten thousand brave Northern boys sleep their last sleep.

At last, roused from our reveries by the evening chill, we begin slowly to descend the mountain.

M. G. W.

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## EXERCISE XXIX.

### NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL OBJECTS IN CONJUNCTION.

*Subjects :*

A Rustic Bridge.	The Old Mill.
Central Park.	A Visit to the Cliff House.
Carmelo Mission.	A Deserted Ranch.
Light-House Rock.	Ruins by Moonlight.

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Let us define clearly just what subjects are contemplated in this exercise. On the one hand we have already dealt with nature and her products, and on the other hand we have touched to some extent upon cer-

tain creations of man, if we may call a creation that which is merely an adaptation and combination of the inanimate products of nature. We shall return again to objects of this latter class as we find them in their highest form of pure art. Now between these two extremes of nature and art lie all combinations of the two in which nature is animate and is allowed at least partial freedom to work out her own ends. Here we can distinguish two pretty sharply defined cases, both of which come under the head of the present exercise. The one is exemplified wherever man has attempted to control or direct the active forces of nature to subserve his own ideals of usefulness or beauty. Thus we find the hillsides converted into vineyards, the prairies into farms, the waterfall into a mechanical power, the grove into a park with lakes and fountains and avenues. The other case is exemplified wherever nature has reclaimed and asserted dominion over the works of man. Thus a Pompeii is buried beneath ashes and scoriæ, a deserted dwelling becomes the lair of wild beasts, a tower falls stone from stone while flowers bloom in its crannies and ivy and mosses make beautiful the most repulsive final stages of decay. Each has its charm, distinct and unmistakable, for though man's work is ever imitation, it is imitation that makes no attempt to deceive.

Some features may in themselves deserve more attention than others, and yet the relative prominence given to various features of the object described may depend on external considerations. It may safely be asserted that no two people get exactly the same impression from the same object. The farmer and the business

man and the artist will look upon a stretch of hill and valley with very different eyes. Now no one of us can get these different impressions in their entire vividness, and yet it becomes our duty in describing to consult as far as possible the tastes and views of those whom we are addressing and to emphasize the points which they would care particularly to have emphasized. In like manner, not only the class of readers addressed, but the time and place and circumstances generally, should have much influence in determining our method of treatment. All of this is only another way of saying that in description we should *select a definite point of view*. The point of view is here taken to mean, in the description of a landscape for instance, not only the topical position of the describer, but also his mental attitude, so to speak. We want to know how he is inclined to look at things. If he describes a meadow-lark we want to know whether he does it as a poet or as a naturalist, so that we shall know from what standpoint we are to read and criticise. This point of view should be clearly indicated somewhere in the beginning, and if it is shifted at any time, as of course it may be occasionally, the reader should have full warning.

The following sample description is taken from Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* :

The full African moon poured down its light from the blue sky into the wide, lonely plain. The dry, sandy earth with its coating of stunted "karroo" bushes a few inches high, the low hills that skirted the plain, the milk-bushes with their long finger-like leaves, all were touched by a weird and almost oppressive beauty as they lay in the white light.

In one spot only was the solemn monotony of the plain broken. Near the centre a small solitary "kopje" rose. Alone it lay there, a heap of round ironstones piled one upon another, as over some giant's grave. Here and there a few tufts of grass or small succulent plants had sprung up among its stones, and on the very summit a clump of prickly pears lifted their thorny arms, and reflected, as from mirrors, the moonlight on their broad fleshy leaves. At the foot of the "kopje" lay the homestead. First, the stone-walled sheep kraals and Kaffir huts; beyond them the dwelling-house — a square red brick building with thatched roof. Even on its bare red walls, and the wooden ladder that led up to the loft, the moonlight cast a kind of dreamy beauty, and quite etherealized the low brick wall that ran before the house, and which enclosed a bare patch of sand and two straggling sunflowers. On the zinc roof of the great open wagon-house, on the roofs of the outbuildings that jutted from its side, the moonlight glinted with a quite peculiar brightness, till it seemed that every rib in the metal was of burnished silver.

Sleep ruled everywhere, and the homestead was not less quiet than the solitary plain. . . .

The farm by daylight was not as the farm by moonlight. The plain was a weary flat of loose, red sand, sparsely covered by dry "karroo" bushes, that cracked beneath the tread like tinder, and showed the red earth everywhere. Here and there a milk-bush lifted its pale-colored rods, and in every direction the ants and beetles ran about in the blazing sand. The red walls of the farmhouse, the zinc roofs of the outbuildings, the stone walls of the kraals, all reflected the fierce sunlight, till the eye ached and blenched. No tree or shrub was to be seen far or near. The two sunflowers that stood before the door, outstared by the sun, drooped their brazen faces to the sand, and the little cicada-like insects cried aloud among the stones of the "kopje."

The punctuation of the above may not always be the most rational, nor are the relative pronouns managed very skillfully, but as a piece of description it is strong and vivid. Notice how effectively the moonlight is

used to soften and blend the artificial with the natural objects, and then how sharply they all stand out in the sunlight. How is the point of view taken at the beginning?

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## EXERCISE XXX.

## NATURE IN ACTIVITY.

*Subjects:*

A Sunrise at Sea.	The Johnstown Flood.
Niagara Falls.	Through a Forest Fire.
A Thunderstorm.	A Prairie Fire.
A Windy Day.	The Recent Earthquake.

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These subjects may seem to suggest only the most striking phenomena of nature and the great ravages which her forces effect. Such, it is true, make stronger impressions on the observer and awaken keener interest in the reader, so that they are favorite subjects for description. But do not allow familiarity or indifference to blind you to the striking aspects of nature's changing mood as exhibited about you daily. The sunrise from your window may be as beautiful as any at sea. The storm that breaks fiercely over your head may be little less sublime than that which hurtles about the peaks and careers down the valleys of the Alps.

Descriptions of this class do not often have for their design the mere imparting of information. That is, they are not usually of a scientific character, but rather of a literary or artistic one. The object is to interest and please the reader, to create in his mind, in all its

original vividness, the picture which the writer has seen, and to arouse in him the same emotions which the writer has felt. To compass this object in any satisfactory degree requires the use of considerably "heightened" language; for the strongest words are but weak picture-makers compared with the flying clouds and the everlasting hills. We use this heightened language whenever we introduce words or expressions that seem elevated above or in any way removed from the sphere of sober thought and simple feeling. Among other things, figures of speech, — simile and metaphor, personification, exclamation, apostrophe, antithesis, — are naturally and freely resorted to. We call these ornaments of speech, and say they serve to give the artistic touches that we desire.

Let us see now, if we can, just in what consist true artistic or literary touches, these ornaments of composition. Are we at liberty to adopt anything that is in itself ornamental? Can we always depend upon its giving a happy effect? How is it in art in general? How is it in life? Why are you not charmed with the savage's paint and feathers? Why does a costly watch chain not displease you, while a pair of diamond earrings does, and even a showy finger ring, in these days when seals are no more, sets you thinking? You say these things offend a cultivated taste. What is a cultivated taste? Shall we say that, whatever else it may be, it is a taste that takes delight in things ornamental only when they at the same time plainly serve some ulterior end? If this is not the truth it is somewhere near it. Thus much we may safely say: that in literature, as in art in general, as in all the avenues of life,



that which is artificial and purely ornamental may be enjoyed and even tolerated only when it does not so much shine with its own beauty as lend luster to that which it is intended to beautify. Every ornament must fit naturally in or appear to spring from what it adorns. You may not with impunity force a figure of speech into a composition; it must seem to belong there by natural right. There will be the same difference in effect that there is between the paint on the society woman's cheek and the color in the school-girl's. You could not take Wordsworth's ponderous figure,

A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved,

and insert it in one of Shelley's delicate descriptions. If your figures help to convey to your readers your own impressions, if your heightened language actually arouses in them the emotions you desire to arouse, well and good. But be chary of ornament for ornament's sake.

#### MODELS.

##### THE TORNADO.

Soon the stars are hidden. A light breeze seems rather to tremble and hang poised than to blow. The rolling clouds, the dark wilderness, and the watery waste shine out every moment in the wide gleam of lightnings still hidden by the wood, and are wrapped again in ever-thickening darkness over which thunders roll and jar and answer one another across the sky. Then, like a charge of ten thousand lancers, come the wind and the rain, their onset covered by all the artillery of heaven. The lightnings leap, hiss, and blaze; the thunders crack and roar; the rain lashes; the waters writhe; the wind smites and howls. For five, for ten, for twenty minutes—for an hour, for two hours—the sky and the flood are never for an instant wholly dark, or the thunder for one moment silent; but while the universal roar sinks and swells,

and the wide, vibrant illumination shows all things in ghostly half-concealment, fresh floods of lightning every moment rend the dim curtain and leap forth; the glare of day falls upon the swaying wood, the reeling, bowing, tossing willows, the seething waters, the whirling rain, and in the midst the small form of the distressed steamer, her revolving paddle-wheels toiling behind to lighten the strain upon her anchor chains; then all are dim ghosts again, while a peal, as if the heavens were rent, rolls off around the sky, comes back in shocks and throbs, and sinks in a long roar that before it can die is swallowed up in the next flash and peal.—George W. Cable, in *Bonaventure* (*Au Large*, chapter xviii.).

#### CLEARING WEATHER.

It was a warm autumn afternoon, and there had been a heavy rain. The sun burst suddenly from among the clouds; and the old battle-ground, sparkling brilliantly and cheerfully at sight of it in one green place, flashed a responsive welcome there, which spread along the country side as if a joyful beacon had been lighted up, and answered from a thousand stations.

How beautiful the landscape kindling in the light, and that luxuriant influence passing on like a celestial presence, brightening everything! The wood, a sombre mass before, revealed its varied tints of yellow, green, brown, red: its different forms of trees, with rain-drops glittering on their leaves and twinkling as they fell. The verdant meadow-land, bright and glowing, seemed as if it had been blind a minute since, and now had found a sense of light wherewith to look up at the shining sky. Cornfields, hedge-rows, fences, homesteads, the clustered roofs, the steeple of the church, the stream, the watermill, all sprang out of the gloomy darkness, smiling. Birds sang sweetly, flowers raised their drooping heads, fresh scents arose from the invigorated ground; the blue expanse above extended and diffused itself: already the sun's slanting rays pierced mortally the sullen bank of cloud that lingered in its flight; and a rainbow, spirit of all the colors that adorned the earth and sky, spanned the whole arch with its triumphant glory.—Charles Dickens, in *Christmas Books* (*The Battle of Life*, part iii.).

The following descriptions may be read with profit :

*Sunrise in Venice.* Poem by Joaquin Miller.

*High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire.* Poem by Jean Ingelow.

The Flood. *The Mill on the Floss*, book vii, chapter v. George Eliot.

Storm off the Coast of Scotland. *Macleod of Dare*, last chapter. William Black.

## EXERCISE XXXI.

### WORKS OF ART.

#### *Subjects :*

A Seaside Villa.

St. Andrew's Church.

The Parthenon.

Indian Beadwork.

An Etruscan Vase.

Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment."

The Laocoön Group.

The difficulties of these descriptions will be greater of course in proportion as the object represents a higher stage of development in its own field of art. There is a vast difference between a Kafir hut and a Gothic cathedral, between an Indian stone image and a Praxitelean statue. The Kafir hut may be picturesque enough in its way, but it is not a work of art and is not intended to be ; it is built for its utility. On the other hand a cathedral is useful in its way, but it is preëminently a work of art. In form and color, in light and shade, in mass and perspective, it is designed throughout to appeal to the æsthetic sense and to work on the emotions of the human heart. As a work of art therefore it must be described. We have

already described buildings from another point of view. But even an ordinary dwelling-house may be constructed so as to attract the eye of the passer-by as well as to contribute to the comfort of those who live in it. Thus we have two radically different points of view. In the present exercise the point of view is that of a person who has an eye for artistic effects.

Note that the point of view is not said to be that of the student of the beautiful or the connoisseur in art. The work before you is still description and not criticism, which latter involves comparisons and the passing of individual judgment. Try to tell what you can plainly see, and not all that your imagination may read into the object, nor all that you think should be there and is not. Have the object before you if possible. It is not safe to trust to memory. Few painters or sculptors will venture far without their models. You are a word-painter now.

There are other fields of art in which the artist appeals to other senses than the sight. But description here becomes so extremely difficult that it is deemed best to omit it. It would indeed be rash, unless one were exceptionally well equipped, to attempt to describe an organ fugue or an orchestral symphony.

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## EXERCISE XXXII.

### DESCRIPTION OF PERSONS.

Take as a subject one of your friends, or perhaps better some one whom you have seen only once or twice, and describe him (or her) as he would appear to

a person who met him for the first time. This means, of course, that the description shall be one almost entirely of externals,—of those qualities, essential or adventitious, which manifest themselves at once to the senses. Character will not play any part in this except so far as it can be inferred from such features as eyes, complexion, gait, and even manner of dress. If the description is of some one who is well known to your readers or hearers, try to make it so accurate and life-like that they will recognize the subject at once.

Here again let us insist upon the necessity of observing a due proportion and relation of parts. Do not continually leap from one detail to another without any apparent connection between the two, whether that connection be expressed or understood. Now and then it may be necessary to do this. In any composition of length there must be some gaps in the train of thought wider than others; and paragraph division is the external sign of this. But such gaps must not occur at every sentence, and even where they do occur let them be as narrow as possible.

The following description is taken from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Part I, Book II, Chapter I. The point of view is that of a chance observer. Notice how the general appearance of wretchedness is heightened by dwelling on the details of clothing.

One day early in the month of October, 1815, about an hour before sunset, a man traveling afoot entered the town of D—. The few inhabitants who at this moment chanced to be at their windows or on the doorsteps of their houses, looked at this traveler with a vague sense of uneasiness. One would not often meet a wayfarer more wretched in appearance. He was a man of medium height, thickset and sturdy, and in the full vigor of life. He might

be forty-six or forty-eight years of age. A cap with a leather tip well pulled down partly concealed his face which was bronzed by the sun and was dripping with sweat. His shirt, of some coarse yellow stuff, fastened at the throat by a little silver anchor, fell open sufficiently to give a glimpse of a shaggy breast. He wore a twisted cravat, shabby breeches of blue ticking, white at one knee, worn through at the other, and an old tattered gray blouse, pieced at one of the elbows with a patch of green cloth sewed on with pack-thread. On his back he carried a well filled knapsack, tightly buckled and quite new; in his hand an enormous knotted stick. His stockingless feet were encased in shoes shod with iron. His head was shaved, his beard long. The perspiration, the heat, the journey on foot, the dust, gave to his whole person an inexpressible air of misery and squalor.

Compare with the above the following from Balzac's *Père Goriot*, and note that here more essential attributes are dwelt upon as indicative of the girl's spiritual environment.

Though Mademoiselle Victorine Taillefer was of a sickly paleness like a girl in feeble health, and though this paleness, joined to an habitual expression of sadness and self-restraint, linked her with the general misery which formed the background of the life about her, yet her face was not an old face, and her movements and her voice were young and sprightly. She seemed like a sickly shrub transplanted into uncongenial soil. Her fair complexion, her auburn hair, her too-slender figure, gave her the grace that modern critics find in the art of the Middle Ages. Her eyes, which were gray with a radiation of dark streaks, expressed the sweetness and resignation of a Christian. Her dress was simple and cheap, but it revealed a youthful form. She was pretty by juxtaposition. Had she been happy she might have been lovely; for happiness lends poetic charm to women, and dress adorns them like a delicate tint of rouge. If the pleasures of a ball had called out the rose-tints on her pallid face; if the comforts and elegancies of life had filled out and remodeled her cheeks, already, alas, too hollow; if love had ever brightened her sad eyes;—then

Victorine might have held her own among the fairest of her sex and age. She needed two things,—two things which are the second birth of women,—the pretty trifles of her sex, and the shy delight of love-letters.

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### EXERCISE XXXIII.

#### CHARACTER DESCRIPTION. — REAL.

*Subjects :*

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| One of My Friends.        | Jack : Poet and Optimist. |
| A Sixteen Year Old Cynic. | An Eccentric Character.   |
| A Ministering Angel.      |                           |
- 

For this work you should know your subject well. The description of external and physical features is not intended to be excluded at all. It was said in the last exercise that these things may give a clue to the real character, and when you assume to know that character it will often be the happiest kind of description merely to suggest it by these features. The reader, knowing your purpose in introducing them, will trust to your more intimate knowledge and so not be afraid of misinterpreting them. The characters described are to be real, that is, actually existing, with all their natural virtues and defects, though of course when you are dealing with a well-known person, even in a school essay, nothing can excuse the failure on your part to exercise both charity and courtesy.

The last subject in the list above has been found an excellent one, and many interesting essays are recalled with such titles as “The Village Factotum,” “The

Philosopher of Pine Ridge," "Uncle Billy," "Old January," "Ben the Ubiquitous," "Garesché, Ord." Nearly every community can boast of one or more of those characters who, for some striking peculiarity or unusual originality in their natures, are branded as eccentric. The term need not convey reproach—it is by no means always invidious. It simply means that these people, in their personal appearance or in their habits of life, depart unusually far from the standards which the average man recognizes. The greatest genius may do that.

Notice in the following how ingeniously the point of view is taken and how impressive the preliminary description of outward appearance makes the sudden revelation of the real man. A subject of this kind must be treated somewhat like those of the preceding exercise, for such a character cannot, from its very nature, be so intimately known to you as that of your bosom friend.

#### THE HERMIT IN THE WILLOWS.

I am sure I do not know what there is connected with the science of frog-catching so essentially different from all other sciences, and so very peculiar that only eccentric characters are able to pursue this profession with marked success. Can it be that frogs are themselves eccentric, and so, since "not to sympathize is not to understand," only "eccentrics" have the power to comprehend the laws which govern them so as to be ever master of their situation? Whatever it is—and it is almost vain to attempt to solve the mystery—the fact remains that the aforementioned class of individuals does excel in the aforementioned vocation, and furthermore, very few who do not belong to that class ever attempt to become professors of that science.

Happening to live in a country where frogs are as plentiful as flies are elsewhere, I have often had the opportunity of meeting



some of the peculiar personages who have made the lucrative profession of frog-catching their calling in life. Nor were the feelings awakened by these chance meetings altogether those of pleasure, for, so far as outward appearances were concerned, these oddities ranged all the way from the idiot to the madman. Oh, there was a variety of them; representatives of nearly all nationalities, and, I am sorry to say, even some of the gentler sex were numbered among them. But by far the most strikingly curious of them all is "the old hermit in the willows," as he is generally called; for no one knows his name.

Nobody who has ever seen the little log hut situated at the very bottom of the ravine which opens into the south end of Lake Merced, and several miles from any other habitation except of beast or bird, would doubt for a moment that no ordinary person dwelt within. Perched upon a slightly elevated island, yet crouching so as to avoid coming in contact with the branches of the low-growing willows that surround and almost entirely conceal it, this dingy gray, moss-covered cabin, with its one length of rusty stove-pipe for a chimney, is a picture of utter solitariness.

If you are awestruck by the aspect of the house, how can you describe the feeling that takes possession of you when you see its sole occupant? A man of medium stature, although bent with age and labor, he would not present an altogether mean appearance if respectably dressed. But so few people have ever seen him; and in his customary attire he is a picture at once ludicrous and pathetic. Coming upon him unawares in his lonely haunt, you would most likely find his costume to consist of a pair of rusty-brown pantaloons, with a huge patch of red flannel on one knee and one of blue drilling on the other; a red and black checked flannel shirt, patched with calico of various colors; a gigantic rubber boot on one foot and a low rubber overshoe on the other; and perhaps a hat (though he rarely wears such a thing) which, judging from the number of holes in its crown and broad brim, might at some time previous to the invention of modern targets have been used as a substitute for such. His entire make-up, so to speak, strikes you as ridiculous, and you laugh aloud, thereby attracting his attention. He turns his face toward you and you stop so suddenly in your laughter that you almost choke.

Perhaps something very different from suppressed laughter helps to produce that choking sensation, for there is something strangely pathetic in the disappointed gaze of the eyes that meet yours. The grizzly beard and long, matted hair, both of a dirty gray, cannot conceal the fine intelligence of the face; the high, broad forehead and fine blue-gray eyes are still there to tell their tale, and now and then you may catch a glimpse of a mouth that is proud and sensitive, yet full of generosity and affection.

Can it be? Can it be that this hermit is proud, sensitive, generous, affectionate? Everything about his clothing and his mean habitation seems to say he is not. You are curious; you would speak to him if you dared. You own to yourself that you are a little afraid of him. Yet your dog trots quietly to his side and pokes her nose up into his face. She is not thrust aside, but gently patted. You are encouraged, and approaching, address him. — Is he fond of dogs? — Yes, he is. — Why does he not keep one? — It costs too much. — You drift from one subject to another, but you find him prepared to discuss all topics. You are beginning to think him a scholar, when two boys come crashing through the willow branches, and before long the old man is solving geometrical problems for them or translating long passages into Latin.

Feeling that you are now intruding, you depart and endeavor to gather some information about the old hermit. From no one, however, can you learn more than that he is poor, lives in the willows alone, and supports himself by catching frogs and selling them in the city. He never rides either to or from the city, and never buys anything but salt and flour, and occasionally gunpowder and shot. He never speaks unless spoken to, and then rarely or never of himself. Surely this is an “eccentric,” yet you respect him, and perhaps even wish he were not. For a long time, perhaps for years after, you will never hear of the willows without hearing of the old hermit and seeing his great blue eyes with their sad, disappointed gaze.

L. M. R.

## EXERCISE XXXIV.

## CHARACTER DESCRIPTION. — IDEAL.

*Subjects:*

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| My Hero.                              | A Dream Incarnate.      |
| “A Knight of the Nineteenth Century.” | The Character of Jesus. |
| “A Perfect Woman, Nobly Planned.”     |                         |

---

The painter strives to put on canvas, the sculptor strives to fashion out of marble, his ideal. Why should not the literary artist strive to do the same thing with his pen? No one of them will get nearer to the heart and soul of another person, real or ideal, than their outward manifestations. But note that while the painter and sculptor are limited to color and form, the literary artist has both these and other resources at his command. Words and actions respond more constantly and quickly to the impulses within, and are therefore the more reliable indications of the character behind them. These words and actions the writer may use freely.

Now ideals are not made of nothing. The Venus of Milo is only a combination of the most perfect features which the sculptor found in a dozen or a hundred human beings. It is a sort of composite photograph with all the distinctness of a simple one, because instead of all the features of all the models being taken, only certain ones are taken from each. It is evident that one man's ideal may sometimes be very nearly realized in a single person, though it is perhaps too much to

hope from nature, human or otherwise, that it may be entirely so.

You must have formed an ideal of what a great and good character should be. If not, it will do no harm to attempt to form one now. Physical features need not be disregarded here any more than in the last exercise, though naturally they will exact a minor share of your attention.

Do not leave the character shadowy merely because it is ideal. Assume that it exists; give it a name and a vocation if you like; make a living man or woman of it, and then treat that man or woman as if you knew him or her intimately. Do not say *he would have* such and such qualities—say explicitly that *he has* them. Nothing detracts from interest so much as distant, indirect treatment.

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## EXERCISE XXXV.

### IMAGINATIVE DESCRIPTION.

#### *Subjects :*

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The Man with the Golden Arm. | The Eighth Voyage of Sinbad |
| Santa Claus at Home.         | the Sailor.                 |
| In the Land of the Fairies.  | Through the Gate of Dreams. |
| An Earthly Paradise.         | A Château en Espagne.       |
| A Child's Idea of Heaven.    |                             |
- 

In this exercise you will have perfect liberty to make use of all the descriptive materials at your command. One suggestion only: Remember still that the imagination can be said to create only in a certain sense—it can construct and combine. It puts the head and arms

of a man on the body of a horse and we have a centaur; it makes a similar combination of a woman and a fish and we have a mermaid. But when these combinations do such violence to all our preconceived ideas of congruity as to take on the character of monstrosities, not every taste will tolerate them. There is plenty of scope for the imagination without going so far. You may picture to yourself a spot more purely Arcadian than any Arcadia on earth and yet have in it nothing unnatural. You may conceive of beings more beautiful, more noble, more lovable, than any you have ever known, without in the least transcending the bounds of possibility.

Imaginative work played a great part in the beginnings of literature: witness the *Song of Solomon*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, the *Nibelungenlied*. It plays a large part yet in the literary reading of children: witness the *Arabian Nights*, the Fairy Tales of Perrault, the Grimm brothers, and Andersen, and the folk-lore of any people. Read George Macdonald's *At the Back of the North Wind*, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's *Gates Ajar* and *Beyond the Gates*. Nathaniel Hawthorne loved to dwell in these realms of the imagination, as many of his shorter tales show; read *The Hall of Fantasy* in *Mosses from an Old Manse*. And Jules Verne, allowing his imagination to run riot in the field of modern science, has given us a score of very readable and even instructive books, of which *A Trip to the Moon* is a fair sample.

Write a fairy story, or an addition to the Arabian Nights' Tales. For anyone of a lively imagination this will prove a real pastime as well as means of literary culture.



## SECTION III. — NARRATION AND DESCRIPTION COMBINED.



### EXERCISE XXXVI.

#### SOCIAL GATHERINGS, ETC.

*Subjects :*

An Old-time Husking Bee.    The Bachelor Club's Annual Ball.  
Nellie's Birthday Party.      A Theatre Party.  
Our Sunday School Picnic.



We shall no longer attempt to keep narration and description apart. As a matter of fact very few productions are purely the one or purely the other; we have seen in the preceding exercises how naturally and almost inevitably we mingle them. On the other hand very few productions partake of the characteristics of both narration and description in an equal degree. Taking advantage of this fact we have in the two foregoing sections pretty well covered the whole ground. There remain however a few classes of subjects into which both kinds of composition enter with nearly equal prominence. But even here you will in all probability find, when you have finished your productions, that they are still essentially narrative or essentially descriptive. That result will be due to yourself—

to the point of view you have chosen to take, or to your predilection for a particular style of treatment. Remember however that the condition is not imposed; you have entire freedom and should endeavor to make use of it.

In the present exercise we have scenes to be depicted, with little or no real plot to be unfolded. Yet they are scenes in which there is much action and in which moreover you are supposed to have been one of the actors. This is somewhat different from standing passively by and watching the progress of events. Here you contribute your share toward the sum of accomplishment.

The main tendency in treating such subjects as those given above will probably be toward description. Therefore restrain it somewhat, or deflect it. Put all the life and action into the scenes that you can. Make the characters walk and talk, smile and frown, laugh and cry for us. If there is comedy let it come out, if there is tragedy let it be revealed. Read the old fairy tale of *Cinderella*; *The Christmas Dinner* in Irving's *Sketch-Book*; *The Archery Tournament* in *Cupid's Arrows*, Rudyard Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

---

## EXERCISE XXXVII.

### PERSONAL ADVENTURES.

#### *Subjects:*

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| A Narrow Escape.       | On a Runaway Car.            |
| A Night in a Cemetery. | The Ghost of Smith's Hollow. |
| Our Burglar.           | My First Bear Hunt.          |
| Caught in a Squall.    | Ascent in a Balloon.         |



The tendency here will be to lay stress on the narrative portions. But the scene of the adventure must be prepared, the circumstances detailed, the actors portrayed ; and all of this involves description. The two must be judiciously interwoven. It is most natural to begin with description, and a little observation will show that the majority of tales do so begin. On the other hand a bit of narration at the first may sometimes be of advantage ; it will be more likely to catch and hold the reader's attention and make him willing to follow through the necessary description which is then introduced later. Let it not be introduced too late, however. The insertion of even the briefest description at a point where the interest is thoroughly aroused will be resented by the reader. Let such passages come at the natural pauses or lulls in the action.

As to the action itself, let it be developed with the utmost naturalness. One event grows out of another in fact ; it should seem to do so likewise in the recital, You have heard people attempt to tell a story who appear to lack what we may call a sense for sequence. They are constantly getting "ahead of themselves," that is, ahead of their story ; and then they have to retrace their steps and the story loses its charm. The fault is an inherent one and it will take close attention and practice to eradicate it. But in writing there is no excuse for it, for the writer has time to consider the sequence of events.

Draw upon your own experience for this adventure, or, if the uneventfulness of your life absolutely constrains you, upon your imagination. Perhaps one of the incidents which you have recorded in the early part

of this work may recur to you as an appropriate subject. If so, expand it to the proportions of a regular story or tale. It may have consisted of a single paragraph then ; make eight or ten of it now. Enter into details of scenes and characters and make them contribute as much as possible to the realism of the events.

It is scarcely necessary to give references to models of this kind of composition. Papers like the *Youth's Companion* contain many such stories, and if you care for examples on a larger scale go to the tales of Sir Walter Scott, Jane Porter, J. Fenimore Cooper, and others.

In the following sketch the writer was more a witness of the action than a participator in it, and therefore the language, while dealing unquestionably with good narrative material, is essentially descriptive, showing again how inseparable the two characteristics often are.

#### BRINGING A SHARK ABOARD.

It is only on the days of calm in the doldrums, when passengers are moping and sailors are loafing, that a landsman gets a chance to learn the seaman's hatred of sharks and to see what pleasure the capture of one gives him.

One such a day a monster about eleven feet long was seen ploughing astern. In a few minutes a stout hook, baited with a junk of fat pork, was thrown overboard. The fish made for it immediately and gulped it down without examination. Then came a tug of war. The combined strength of half a dozen men exerted on the tackle which had been made fast to the end of the line, was just enough to budge the shark when in the water ; but when once his head was above the surface his power was gone, and very soon we saw him dangling from the stern, his tail just touching the water. Then the purpose of the short chain fastened to the hook became apparent : as he swung there, his grinding rows

of teeth would have cut through a line in a moment and he would have dropped in the water free, but as it was, the only effect was a horrid scratching noise that sent through most of us a shiver of fear.

By means of a running loop passed over his head and drawn tight just above the tail, he was pulled up until he was level with the gunnel. Then with the aid of a guy rope he was hauled aboard and landed on deck, thrashing fiercely with his tail and snapping ferociously. His eyes had to be put out first, for while he could see it was impossible to approach him; when he was blind, however, it was an easy matter for one of the sailors to creep cautiously up to him and chop off his tail, thus rendering him powerless to do any damage.

Now that he was comparatively quiet it was no great task to despatch him. All had a hand in the disemboweling, laughing triumphantly and joking over the possibility of finding a gold watch or other clue to his former life in the capacious stomach. One sliced the liver and threw it into the pig-sty, while another cut out the still beating heart and threw it to the dog; and yet, with eyes out, tail off, disemboweled, with the pigs digesting his liver and the dog devouring his heart, he still spluttered and gasped, refusing to die.

Soon however all the flesh was cut away and thrown overboard, the only things saved being the backbone, which makes a beautiful walking-stick the sailors say, and the rows of teeth, which passed into the hands of some of the ladies and which were afterwards seen in a little girl's possession in the shape of a necklace.

R. L. D.

## EXERCISE XXXVIII.

### EXCURSIONS, TRAVELS.

#### *Subjects:*

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Our Expedition to Fall Creek.  | From Detroit to Chicago on a |
| Camping on the Bluff.          | Bicycle.                     |
| Through Colorado Cañon.        | Climbing the Matterhorn.     |
| An Excursion to Niagara Falls. | An Afternoon Outing.         |

Countless books of travel have been written and published, though few of them have met with large sales and fewer still have found a place among works of recognized literary merit. The explanation lies in the fact that this is the most tempting field of letters because apparently the easiest. Every tyro who has been away from home awhile thinks he has materials for a book. But matter without rational form and becoming dress is not literature. Besides, ninety-nine times out of a hundred the tyro has no materials of worth. He has seen only what is on the surface, what everybody else can see for himself, and what therefore everybody else does not want to read about.

One thing which will warrant the writing of books of this class is the fact that one has explored a region of the earth or studied conditions of life little known and not accessible to the world at large. When a Livingstone or a Stanley has penetrated to the heart of the African continent, when a Kane has made an expedition into the Arctic seas, when a Kennan has explored the most hidden horrors of life in Russia and Siberia, the public read with avidity such books as *Through the Dark Continent*, *Arctic Explorations*, and *Siberia and the Exile System*. Or when a naturalist travels over any portion of the earth with a keen eye and a quick ear for the marvels and mysteries of nature, we read with equal delight and profit an Alexander von Humboldt's *Kosmos* and an Agassiz's *Journey in Brazil*. Yet again, when a man can go among familiar scenes and well-known peoples, and from the materials always to be found there as well as anywhere can construct works of genuine literary

charm and merit, we shall always be ready to welcome them. Such books are Bayard Taylor's *Views Afoot* and Longfellow's *Outre-Mer*.

Let these facts serve as hints to guide us in our writing now. For though we are working here on a smaller scale, the problem before us is practically the same—to produce work which shall be valuable for the facts it contains, or interesting for the novelty of those facts, for the original light in which they are exhibited, or for the literary charm with which they are invested. It is certainly well worth while to keep a record of one's wanderings, however limited they may be, if he can succeed in producing such word-pastels as the writer of the following has done.

#### A LEAF FROM MY DIARY.

Malosand, Sweden, July 15, 1886.—The candle flares so that I can hardly write, yet it is too warm to close the windows. The stars are twinkling outside in all their glory and the little Swedish village lies asleep at my feet. We had such a lovely walk this evening, my sister and I. It was one of those long beautiful summer evenings that are found only in northern countries.

In our stroll we passed by the village square. It is surrounded by low wooden buildings, and in it was a circus. This was the center of attraction for a number of peasant children who were gaping at it in wonder and amazement. The whole scene was so like an American town and yet so different that it made me homesick. We walked on to a little inn and there indulged in some tea and cake, and were surprised to find the total bill to be only six cents.

It was dark when we again emerged into the open air, and nothing broke the perfect stillness of the night save the faint thump, thump of the bass drum coming over the meadow from the distant circus. We paused a moment to take in the tranquillity of the scene and then silently retraced our steps.

J. M. L.

## EXERCISE XXXIX.

## SCENES FROM LIFE.

*Subjects :*

Commencement Day.	Around the Hotel Stove.
A Fire in Fourth Ward.	In an East Side Tenement House.
Shopping in Jonesville.	An Hour on 'Change.
A Visit to Chinatown.	The Farm at Five o'Clock in the
An Auction.	Morning.
A Political Mass Meeting.	A Boarding School Scene.

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Here is an inexhaustible field. It is preëminently the field of the dramatist, but that does not mean that all who work in it must be what are commonly known as dramatists. Much is dramatic in essence that is not so in form. Many of our best poems and perhaps most of our novels belong in this class. And there are newspaper pen-sketches innumerable that pretend to the same distinction ; they are nothing if not dramatic.

What is it to be dramatic? Broadly, it is to be exhibitivè of the passions and actions that grow out of any given combination of character and circumstance ; it is to be a portraiture of some phase of human life. Balzac has given us a long series of such portraitures in his colossal work *La Comédie Humaine*, which consists of a number of "scenes from private, provincial, Parisian, political, military, and country life," aiming to give a more or less complete and accurate picture of the France of his day.

What are the requisites of a dramatic writer? First, that requisite of writers and artists in general, a gift for "the earnest and intense seizing of natural facts "

— the words are Ruskin's ; secondly, a quick, unerring perception of the relations, causal or otherwise, that bind these facts together into a unified whole ; lastly, the power to reproduce through the medium of language these facts and relations without diminution of their original force and vitality.

How shall these requisites be acquired? So far as they are acquirable and not dependent on native talent, thus : Observe human nature closely ; study it, ponder over it, note and compare ; read Shakespeare, Hugo, Browning, Scott, Balzac, Bret Harte, and wrest from them if you can something of their secret ; write unceasingly.

For the work now in hand read the court scene in the fourth act of *The Merchant of Venice* ; the opening scene in *Romeo and Juliet* ; read the tales of Kipling and of Bret Harte, the novels of Howells, the ballads of Will Carleton. Portray then, in a realistic manner, any scene from life that you have witnessed, from a street brawl to a presidential inauguration. Let your characters speak and act for themselves — it is the most effective kind of description. Moralize little or not at all ; depend on your story to point its own moral.

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## EXERCISE XL.

### SCENES FROM HISTORY.

#### *Subjects :*

New England in the Early Colonial Period.	Washington's Army at Valley Forge.
The South before the War.	The Greeks before Troy.
California in the 'Fifties.	Rome under the Caesars.
	Christ before Pilate.

The compositions written in the last exercise were nothing more or less than chapters from contemporaneous history. They differed from the historical sketches written in Exercise XV. in that they consisted of something more than a narration of events — they depicted characters and customs as well. This may be called pictorial or picturesque history, and we have begun to realize that a history without these characteristics is not worthy of the name. Let us try now to treat chapters from past history in the same way.

It may be objected that past history cannot be written from observation and experience and therefore does not come within the province of this portion of our work. But we have reached the transition point now, and whether this exercise falls upon one side or the other makes little difference. This may be said in favor of placing it here: picturesque history writing is chiefly a matter of the imagination, and the imagination is a kind of second sight. Given a few recorded facts, the imagination reconstructs, from these and from the material furnished the mind by actual observation and experience, scenes that are forever past the power of man to witness otherwise. When one reads, for instance, in the chapter on Pindar in John Addington Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets*, a description of the Olympic games, one gets such a vivid picture of the scene that he can hardly believe the author never beheld it. And has he not in truth beheld it? — with that mental vision that looks back over two thousand years as easily as over twenty.

Precisely how faithful these reconstructions are we cannot of course determine. But there is about facts



a certain "eternal fitness," and we shall hardly get a sense of this fitness from anything that is not a faithful portrayal of facts. The ability for such portrayal may be a gift, but we know that some have possessed it. For example, certain portions of Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*, vividly and accurately descriptive of oriental lands and scenes, are said to have been written before the author ever visited the particular region.

For models, read the crucifixion scene in the last chapter of *Ben Hur*, the last chapter of Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, and almost any chapter of George Lippard's *Legends of the American Revolution*.



PART II.

Composition Based on Reading and  
Thought.



## Introductory: Principles of Composition.



We shall now enter a field of composition in which writers are too often expected to begin without any preparation such as we have endeavored to obtain. New faculties will be taxed and new powers called into play. Experience and observation are by no means to be set aside, but they are to be supplemented by wider reading and particularly by reflection and independent thought. The material that we have been gathering all along will not be ignored; we shall merely make a different use of it.

We have been recording and chronicling and picturing; storing facts in places accessible to all; fixing permanently the fleeting acts and feelings of the moment; reproducing beautiful forms and colors for future contemplation. Now we must organize these facts, discover the relations they bear to one another, and draw from them, if may be, broader facts which lie beyond the range of ordinary observation; we must transform the material lines and colors into emblems of spiritual beauty, and weave the threads of experience into a philosophy of life. Thus will literature subserve its highest ends.

Of the methods of finding material we spoke in the introduction to Part I. In the meantime we have gone ahead and worked that material into compositions

as best we could. In regard to methods for the latter process some suggestions have been made, but much remains to be said, and perhaps the best place to say it once for all is here.

As to mere mechanical execution, the writing of sentences on paper, let the printed page be your guide. You may not be able to equal, in writing, the neatness and precision of print, but by giving careful attention to margins, spacing, capitalization, punctuation, indentation for paragraphs, etc., you can approach them. The advantages of mechanical neatness and accuracy that make them worth striving for are so manifest that they do not need to be pointed out. Perhaps, too, these habits cultivated in mechanical matters will react upon thought and expression themselves, tending toward increased clearness and orderliness.

Now as to the best expression of thought, the best way of putting into words what we think—that is to say, the best literary style—how shall it be attained? In answer we can only go back to the fundamental principles of rhetorical science and say that the chief aims of every writer should be, in the order of their usual importance, clearness, force, and beauty; and that these must be sought through unremitting attention to the mediums of expression—words, sentences, paragraphs, and whole compositions.

First of all, do not exaggerate to yourself the difficulty of writing. You can talk fluently enough by the hour; why should you not write as fluently? Be simple and natural, correcting errors when the committing of thought to writing discloses them, making improvement wherever reflection shows that improve-

ment is possible. In time no doubt the habit of writing with forethought and afterthought, of searching for more appropriate words and more effective forms, will develop a literary style considerably above the plane of your ordinary conversational style. But do not make the mistake of thinking that you must begin with this. It is not even necessary, for eminence in the field of letters, that you should ever reach it, and often the best means of reaching it is through simplicity. Mark how simply Washington Irving writes, or Benjamin Franklin in his *Autobiography*, or Sir Charles Darwin in his *Letters*. And yet the writings of these men possess literary merit of a very high order.

Endeavor to use only such words as shall be intelligible and inoffensive to all. Obsolete words, words that are gradually dropping out of use, and words that are just coming into use, should be employed, if at all, with a full recognition of the risk incurred: the time may come when their presence will render the composition worthless. Words from a foreign language that have not become naturalized are generally unnecessary and are best avoided. They throw the user under the suspicion of pedantry. Provincialisms, or words whose use is limited to certain localities, and peculiarities of dialect (except in "dialect pieces") should likewise be eschewed. Slang is of course inadmissible. Between a long and a short word, other things being equal, the principle of economy would suggest the choice of the short one. Between Latin and Saxon derivatives there is perhaps no fixed consideration to govern our choice; the peculiar virtues of the Saxon word are admitted, but they have probably been overpraised. A specific

word will lend greater vigor than a generic one, especially in descriptive writing. Occasionally a word, entirely unobjectionable in itself, must be rejected because it interferes too much with the rhythm and euphony of the sentence. Within these limitations choose always the word that seems to convey most exactly your meaning.

Short sentences give clearness. Long sentences give dignity. Short sentences give the sparkle of the faceted diamond. Long sentences give the luster of the polished pearl. The long sentence offers many difficulties in construction and is full of pitfalls for the unskillful. The best style will exhibit both in ever varying proportions. It is in the construction of the individual sentence, the arrangement and conformity of its parts, more than in any other one thing, that the difficulty and therefore the test of good writing lies. Take almost any complex sentence and you will find that it can be arranged in several ways, some manifestly better than others. The problem is to find the best way. Looseness is avoided by seeking the periodic structure, that is, such a structure as will not yield a complete meaning until the end of the sentence is reached. Parts that bear a close grammatical relation to each other should not be far separated except for emphasis. Remember that the emphatic positions in a sentence are the beginning and the end. The arrangement will often be controlled by the attractive forces of sentences that precede and that follow.

The paragraph, of comparatively modern invention, is too useful to be slighted. It consists of a series of sentences that have a common bearing in thought.



But since it is intended for the guidance of the eye, its length is restricted, and therefore the basis of division will depend somewhat arbitrarily on the length of the whole composition. If you are treating a theme very briefly under a dozen heads, you will probably make a dozen corresponding paragraphs; but if you are writing a whole volume on the same theme\*with the same divisions, you will have to confine your paragraphs to minuter subdivisions of the thought. Frequent paragraph division will give the page an open appearance that is more inviting to the average reader than a page of matter written or printed "solid." But the fundamental office of the paragraph should never be forgotten, or its value will be annulled.

The whole composition should have unity and coherence. The first is secured by narrowing the subject as much as possible or desirable and by keeping it steadily in mind throughout, resisting all temptations to digress. The second is secured by observing some natural order in the development of the theme, by remembering the office of the paragraph, and by indicating clearly the relation of paragraph to paragraph and sentence to sentence through proper distribution of emphasis and the discriminating use of connecting words and unambiguous adverbs and pronouns of reference. Both are secured by making an outline of the composition before writing it out in detail.

The standard by which all of these matters are measured is *good usage*, and the best writers of the present day constitute the ultimate court of appeal. This does not mean that any one shall be a servile follower or imitator, repressing individuality and perpetuating

monotony. It only means that by familiarity with the best literature of the day we come to recognize the limits within which liberty is not license, and so are enabled to conform to the requirements of a somewhat variable and vaguely defined "cultivated taste." Individual taste must of course take the place of this in all cases of doubt. When we use the word *taste* we imply, what has been so well brought out by Professor Barrett Wendell in his lectures on English Composition, that the question here is always one of better or worse, not of right or wrong. Instead of asking whether a certain expression is correct or otherwise, we ask whether it is as clear as it might be, or as vigorous, or as beautiful. Thus composition is removed from the exact sciences to a place among the arts.

We have spoken of the importance of clearness. It is perhaps not too much to say that almost everything else should be sacrificed to this. Certainly it should always be made the first consideration, for that which is obscure, however good it may be otherwise, will find no readers until they are assured of its merit, and even then is likely to find but few. It is not only a duty that every writer owes to his readers, to express himself in the plainest terms possible, but it is the only safeguard against misinterpretation and would therefore seem to be dictated by the instinct of self-defense.

After clearness seek strength. A vigorous style of writing is bound to move more effectually than a feeble one, and to move many readers who would not be moved at all by a weak appeal. Strength usually goes with rapidity and is therefore obtained by elimination and condensation. Diffuseness and prolixity are fatal

faults. As a rule, omit everything that is not strictly pertinent to the subject in hand and then abbreviate in form what still remains, stopping short always of the brevity which gives a sense of incompleteness or which leads to obscurity. Sometimes however force seems to be best gained by fullness and judicious repetition.

Beauty is not found in every phase of life, nor shall we expect to find it in every form of literature. Still its presence is rarely resented, and even among the practical, plain, and homely things with which life and literature alike must deal, touches of genuine beauty will not seem obtrusive. But least of all is this element to be sought, for least of all will it come for the seeking. Like loveliness of form and face, grace of pen and eloquence of speech do not hold themselves subject to our command. Partly they come, if at all, as a natural inheritance, and partly as the reward of long and patient wooing. And if they are not already ours, we can do no better than pursue our straightforward course, lured by no false glitter, turning aside for no meretricious ornament, and perhaps in the end we too shall find some share of these elusive charms.



## SECTION I.—EXPOSITION.



### EXERCISE XLI.

#### INTRODUCTORY PRACTICE.

*Subjects :*

Descriptive Composition.      The Art of Narration.



To expose or expound is to set forth, to lay open. Exposition then is the act of setting forth or laying open to view, the act of unfolding, defining, explaining, interpreting. And whenever this act concerns itself with *terms*, which denote objects of thought, or with *propositions*, which express relations between objects of thought, we have *rhetorical* or *literary exposition*.

We shall have to go a step further and say that rhetorical exposition concerns itself, not with singular terms, which denote single objects only, but with general terms, which stand for any one of a number of objects having certain qualities in common ; and the same is true of propositions. For example, you cannot expound *James White*. You can describe him. You can say that he is a tall man with dark eyes and well chiseled features ; and this is description. But it is not exposition. Now notice that in this description a great deal is taken for granted. There is the general term *man*

which is not explained. To an intelligence which should know nothing of the meaning of the word man, the description would be unintelligible until that word were explained. Such explanation would be technically called exposition.

How shall we set about expounding general terms? Take the term *man*. We should not say, as we said of James White, that a man has dark eyes, for that is true of some men only. But we should say, among other things, that a man is a creature with two eyes. That is, we should select only those qualities that are possessed by every normal individual of the class comprehended by the general term. Description deals with individuals, pointing out the features that distinguish one individual from all others; exposition deals with generals, with classes, pointing out the features that are common to all individuals of the class. The need of exposition in the above case may not be so obvious because the term is well understood, but if I say "*Paradise Lost* is a sublime epic," many readers will want the meaning of the term *epic* expounded.

Of course, from another point of view, these class features are distinctive. That is, the class is only one among other classes, and to be distinguished from them. The possession of two eyes marks off men at once from all creatures possessing more eyes or fewer. Man is but one division of a more comprehensive class, — animal. On the other hand classes may be subdivided, and features that are not common to the whole class may be common to the members of one of the subdivisions. For example, while we cannot say that men are dark-eyed, we may fairly say that Italians are so.

And the Italian race may well be a subject for exposition. It is when we reach the individual in the last analysis that we have a proper subject for description. There are many Italians — the term may be expounded ; there is only one Dante — he may be described. You may expound the meaning of tree and meadow and river, but you describe the landscape about you which has no exact counterpart among all the landscapes of the earth.

Strictly speaking, a subject for exposition is neither a material object nor an actual event. It is merely a mental concept — a concept formed by putting together in thought a certain number of common qualities or actions. Every individual of a class has the common class-qualities, but it has something more than these — it has in addition its individual characteristics. If it were possible to strip it of these latter, we should have our concept embodied, so to speak. But it is manifestly impossible to have a rose possessing size without being of any particular size, or possessing color without being of any particular color, although that is just what is contemplated by the concept called up in our mind by the general term *rose*.

For the present then rhetorical exposition may be defined as the process of defining and explaining the concepts called up in the mind by general terms or propositions.

All that has been said thus far in this exercise may be taken as an example of this process : it is an exposition of the term *exposition*. Now take one of the two subjects given at the head of this exercise and write a brief expository essay upon it. You must have obtained

from your practice and from the suggestions in the previous part of this book a pretty clear idea of what is comprehended by narrative or by descriptive composition. Expound that idea.

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## EXERCISE XLII.

### INFORMAL ESSAYS.

*Subjects :*

Games of Chance.	A House Divided against Itself.
Popular Superstitions.	Penny Wise, Pound Foolish.
The Court Jester.	The Child is Father of the Man.
Modern Chivalry.	“Princes and Republics are Ungrateful.”

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Expository composition is not, as might be inferred from the last exercise, limited to dry technical or abstruse subjects. There are multitudes of more or less vague ideas and of imperfectly settled relations in everyday life that open a tempting field to the expositor; the above list of subjects might be extended indefinitely. Remember only that you are to select general ideas and propositions: not, for instance, Triboulet, court jester to Francis I. of France, but the genus court jester; not the neglect of the United States Government in allowing Robert Morris to die in a debtor's prison, but the ungratefulness of republics.

Moreover, while the primary purpose of exposition is to assist the understanding, this does not forbid presenting it in a popular and interesting shape. Informal essays on these topics were at one time very much in



vogue, and their charm is by no means unappreciated to-day. One needs only to mention the names of Montaigne and Addison to prove this. We call these essays informal because they do not follow any rigid classification nor attempt to exhaust the subject or any phase of it. They are more or less rambling, though a cultivated literary sense will take care that they do not produce too disjointed an effect. Their interest is often heightened by giving them a personal tone, by pitching them in the colloquial key, as if the writer were conversing with his reader face to face instead of trying to reach him at long range.

To write in this style is not difficult, since it involves no very strenuous thought. But whatever the writing may lack, for this reason, in positive value, should be compensated for, if possible, by liveliness and pungency of style. For models, read the essays of Montaigne, of Addison, of Charles Lamb. Among the latter's may be specified *The Old and the New Schoolmaster*, *Grace Before Meat*, *A Dissertation on Roast Pig*, *Poor Relations*. The essays of Bacon may be referred to, though the familiar tone and the personal element are lacking in them. But they consist for the most part of a series of such detached observations that they can hardly be dignified with the name of formal or scientific essays.

The following model is extracted from *A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars*, one of the *Essays of Elia*. The long succession of short sentences and the antiquated forms are not commended for imitation.

Poverty is a comparative thing. . . . Its pretences to property are almost ludicrous. Its pitiful attempts to save excite a smile. Every scornful companion can weigh his trifle-bigger purse

against it. Poor man reproaches poor man in the streets with impolitic mention of his condition, his own being a shade better, while the rich pass by and jeer at both. No rascally comparative insults a Beggar, or thinks of weighing purses with him. He is not in the scale of comparison. He is not under the measure of property. He confessedly hath none, any more than a dog or a sheep. No one twitteth him with ostentation above his means. No one accuseth him of pride or upbraideth him with mock humility. None jostle with him for the wall, or pick quarrels for precedency. No wealthy neighbor seeketh to eject him from his tenement. No man sues him. No man goes to law with him. If I were not the independent gentleman that I am, rather than I would be a retainer to the great, a led captain, or a poor relation, I would choose, out of the delicacy and true greatness of my mind, to be a Beggar.

Rags, which are the reproach of poverty, are the Beggar's robes, and graceful insignia of his profession, his tenure, his full dress; the suit in which he is expected to show himself in public. He is never out of the fashion, or limpeth awkwardly behind it. He is not required to put on court mourning. He weareth all colors, fearing none. His costume hath undergone less change than the Quaker's. He is the only man in the universe who is not obliged to study appearances. The ups and downs of the world concern him no longer. He alone continueth in one stay. The price of stock or land affecteth him not. The fluctuations of agricultural or commercial prosperity touch him not, or at worst but change his customers. He is not expected to become bail or security for any one. No man troubleth him with questioning his religion or politics. He is the only free man in the universe.

The following is another example of this popular kind of exposition, though written in a very different style:

#### ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

A word about American aristocracy, to begin with.

What, American aristocracy?

Yes, certainly.

I assure you that there exist, in America, social sanctuaries into which it is more difficult to penetrate than into the most exclusive mansions of the Faubourg Saint-Germain or of Mayfair and Belgravia. . . .

The Americans, not having any king to give them titles of nobility, have created an aristocracy for themselves. This aristocracy boasts as yet no dukes, marquises, earls, or barons, but the blue blood is there, it appears — Dutch blood, as a rule — and that is sufficient. . . .

A New York lady, who is quite an authority upon such matters, told me one day that Society in New York was composed of only four hundred persons. Outside of this company of elect, all Philistines.

Money or celebrity may allow you to enter into this charmed circle, but you will never belong to it. You will be in it, but not of it. The lady in question entered also into very minute details on the subject of what she called the difference between "Society people" and "people in Society"; but in spite of all her explanations I confess I did not seize the delicate shades of distinction she tried to convey. All I clearly understood was that the aristocracy of birth exists in America, not only in the brains of those who form part of it, but also in the eyes of their compatriots.

The desire to establish an aristocracy of some sort was bound to haunt the breast of the Americans; it was the only thing that their dollars seemed unable to procure them.

The second aristocracy is the aristocracy of money, plutocracy. To belong to this it is not sufficient to be a millionaire, — you must, I am told, belong to a third generation of millionaires. Of such are the Astors, the Vanderbilts, and company. . . . In the eyes of these people to have from thirty or forty to fifty thousand dollars a year is to be in decent poverty. To have two or three hundred thousand dollars a year is to be in easy circumstances.

The third aristocracy is the aristocracy of talent, — literary and artistic society. This third aristocracy is incontestably the first, if you will excuse the Hibernicism.

I do not think that one could find anywhere, or even imagine, a society more refined, more affable, more hospitable, more witty, or more brilliant.

One of the consequences of the position which woman takes in the United States, is that in good American drawing-rooms conversation is never dull. "If I were queen," exclaimed Madame Récamier one day, "I should command Madame de Staël to talk to me all day long." One would like to be able to give the same order to plenty of American women. — Max O'Rell, in *Jonathan and His Continent*.

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## EXERCISE XLIII.

### FORMAL ESSAYS.

#### *Subjects :*

Our Public School System.	Sunday Newspapers.
Hypnotism : What It Is.	Child Labor in the United
Elements of Pleasure in Poetry.	States.
American Love of Sport.	

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Many readers of the present day are not satisfied merely to be entertained — they demand accurate information, instruction. And writers, inspired with something of the same spirit, seek to satisfy this demand. Thus has grown up the modern essay — a species of composition rather brief in form, impersonal in tone, shorn of all unnecessary allusions, addressed immediately to the intellect, and seeking to treat its subject exhaustively though not necessarily in minute detail. The old informal essay may convey much information, but that information is not organized in such a way as to give it the greatest utility nor does it pretend to be complete ; it is suggestive rather than definitive. The writer has not taken the trouble to make himself thoroughly familiar with his subject, and the chances are that the reader will not go any farther ;

thus the value even of its suggestiveness is minimized. The more formal, didactic essay imposes a severer task on the writer. He must endeavor thoroughly to familiarize himself with his subject, to get a comprehensive view of it in all its bearings, so that he can treat it from the standpoint of one having authority to speak.

We say this kind of essay is one of the demands of the times. The entire field of legitimate knowledge has been so immeasurably broadened that each man must limit his own investigations to a very small portion of it. But he naturally desires to know the results of others' investigations, and therefore he expects from them, in a readily accessible form, such definite information as they alone can give. The didactic essay is one of the mediums of this interchange.

In most cases perhaps it aims to be exhaustive, though within its ordinary limits it can be so only broadly, not minutely. For example, this result may be reached by setting forth the most apparent divisions of a subject without entering into the subdivisions. The method of treatment presupposes a definite plan in the writer's mind. Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon this plan. It is no exaggeration to say that every such essay will be the gainer if one half of the time allotted for its preparation is devoted to the construction of the plan. This involves the gathering of materials and then the fitting them together and the building them up into a framework of thought; what remains thereafter is but a minor task for one who has any skill in composition.

The plan should follow some fixed principle. This principle may be logical, historical, chronological, —

little matter what; only it should be rigorously adhered to. Let the plan be fully made out before there is any attempt toward writing the essay: the work of composition then will consist merely in an amplification of the plan and will be found comparatively easy.

The essays of Macaulay and De Quincey fall under this class. Numerous examples may be found too in the current numbers of such magazines as the *North American Review*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Popular Science Monthly*, *Forum*, *Arena*. Instead of appending here any model of this kind of composition, the following plans are presented for study. The first is abstracted from an essay by Charles F. Thwing in the *Educational Review* for April, 1892. The first main division is of the nature of an introduction and propounds a question. The body of the essay is devoted to answering this question. In the conclusion a lesson is drawn—a way is suggested of applying to advantage the knowledge which has been arrived at. This plan may never have been written out by the writer, but it must have been pretty clearly defined in his mind.

#### THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT.

Unusual amount of notice recently attracted to this office.

Frequent resignations, elections, declinations.

Comparative lack of success. What is the reason?

The college president represents at least four distinct relations:

Relation to the governing board,

Relation to the faculty,

Relation to the students,

Relation to the general public.

These manifold and diverse relations demand rare versatility of talent.

As a help toward lightening his difficulties, let the college president's work be made as definite as possible.

The following is an outline of a portion of an article by Henrietta L. Synnot in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1874 :

#### LITTLE PAUPERS.

Discussion limited to those children who are adopted by the State through no fault of their own ; particularly to girls of the "Metropolitan District."

Three classes :

Orphans,  
Deserted,  
Casuals.

Classes defined.

Three methods of dealing with them (the methods not coincident with the classes) :

Boarding out,  
Separate schools,  
District schools.

Results of training. Conclusions drawn from official reports.

Working system of schools.

Later career of girls.

Appearance and health.  
Indifference to praise or blame.  
Capabilities.

Examples.

Significance of these results.

#### EXERCISE XLIV.

#### SCIENTIFIC TREATISES.

##### *Subjects :*

The Flora of Our County.	Evolution of Dress.
Fauna of the Middle States.	Social Orders of America.
Lepidoptera.	Newspapers of To-day.
The Violet Family.	

We shall have to recognize here this class of literature, though it is difficult to select from it suitable subjects for elementary exercise in composition. The scientific treatise depends for its value so almost entirely on laborious research and severe thought that it seems scarcely worth considering at all from the standpoint of composition. It must be of a length, too, even in monographs on the narrowest subjects, that makes it inconvenient as a form of writing for mere practice.

And yet a little reflection will show that we have already trenched upon this field. In the section devoted to Description, Exercises XVII. and XX.-XXVII., there were included among the subjects many general terms which called more properly for scientific exposition than for description. But the intention was rather that some individual of the class should be selected, in which case the description would not meet the requisites of an exposition. For exposition demands that we shall first observe large numbers of individuals until we shall have formed a general conception from which we can be reasonably sure all particular qualities or temporary conditions have been excluded. One must have seen a great many violets, stemmed and stemless, white and yellow and blue, heart- and arrow- and palmate-leaved, before he can treat scientifically the violet family.

We have treated of exposition thus far as if it had to deal only with logical definition, that is, with the discovery of all the common qualities which the general term implies. But there is another side to it. It deals also with what is called logical division, that is, the enumeration of all the individuals to which the general



term may be applied. The general term is said to *connote* the former and to *denote* the latter. Thus the word *man* connotes two eyes, ten fingers, an upright body, a reasoning faculty, etc. It denotes, according to geographical divisions, Americans, Europeans, Africans, etc. ; or, according to one ethnological division, Caucasians, Mongolians, and Ethiopians. Again, men might be divided into Christians, Jews, Mahometans, etc.

Let us give a scientific exposition of the term triangle :

Triangle connotes  
 a circumscribed space,  
 three lines,  
 three angles.

It denotes  
 plane triangles,  
 spherical triangles,  
 curvilinear triangles.

Plane triangle connotes  
 a circumscribed space,  
 three straight lines,  
 three angles.

It denotes, according to one division, triangles having  
 no two sides equal — *scalene*,

two sides equal  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{all sides equal — } \textit{equilateral}, \\ \text{not all sides equal — } \textit{isosceles}. \end{array} \right.$

According to another division, based on the difference in angles instead of the differences in sides, it denotes triangles having one right angle — *right-angled*,

no right angle —  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{one obtuse angle — } \textit{obtuse-angled}, \\ \textit{oblique-angled} \\ \text{no obtuse angle — } \textit{acute-angled}. \end{array} \right.$

And likewise with the denotation of spherical and curvilinear triangles. Make a similar exposition of the term *quadrangle*.

It is evident that logical division may often be made on a number of different principles ; on so great a

number in the case of certain broad subjects, such for instance as mankind, that no exposition could ever hope to exhaust them. Still, an exposition may be considered complete which, after defining its subject, makes a careful division of it on some one principle. It may be advisable at times to select several, provided always that each division be complete in itself and there be no confusion. It would not do to classify newspapers as weekly, daily, democratic, and independent; for these divisions not only fail to cover the whole class but they overlap one another.

It does not come within our scope here to undertake anything of such magnitude as a genuine scientific treatise. We are concerned only with learning how to proceed when such a work is contemplated. Instead then of writing a regular essay, select a subject which admits of some flexibility of treatment (note the last ones in the above list) and prepare an outline indicating how it may be treated.

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## EXERCISE XLV.

### CRITICISM.

#### *Subjects :*

Wordsworth and Bryant.	Realism in Art.
Ibsen's Claim to Greatness.	Standards of Eloquence.
Light Literature.	Neutrality as a Political Principle.

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The critic should bring to his work the utmost fairness of spirit. He should be ready to praise freely what he finds good as well as to condemn unreservedly

what he finds bad in the object of his criticism. He must of course have certain standards in his own mind. Others will realize that these standards are personal and therefore not absolute. It is the critic's plain duty then to keep these standards as just as may be, and, for the rest, to judge unflinchingly by them. Thus while finality of judgment he may not attain, sincerity at least he can.

Besides impartiality the critic should have a keen perception and a lively sympathy. This last quality is perhaps most essential of all. It is the fundamental principle of the greatest school of modern critics that the critic should endeavor to put himself in the place of the writer and enter into full sympathy with his work, to look at it from his standpoint, to take fully into account his motives and objects, and determine how well he has performed his task and how nearly he has attained the ideal set before him.

Criticism is exposition, for it is concerned with defining the province of art, letters, philosophy, etc., and with determining the place of any particular work in its own province.

One valuable help in exposition is the making of comparisons of all kinds, bringing out similarities and dissimilarities. This is one of our most common resorts in the acquisition of all knowledge and therefore not to be overlooked here. Just as the artist puts a man at the base of the pyramid in his picture, or a tree on the mountain side, or a boat on the river, in order that we may have a more accurate idea of the respective sizes of these objects, so the skillful expositor will set before us familiar things by which to gauge and better under-

stand the unfamiliar. Such comparison will play a peculiarly large part in criticism, which involves either establishing standards or judging by them.

For examples read the critical works of Francis Jeffrey, Matthew Arnold, Professor Dowden, James Russell Lowell, John Ruskin. The following is excerpted from Matthew Arnold's essay *On Translating Homer*:

Therefore, I say, the translator of Homer should penetrate himself with a sense of the plainness and directness of Homer's style; of the simplicity with which Homer's thought is evolved and expressed. He has Pope's fate before his eyes to show him what a divorce may be created even between the most gifted translator and Homer by an artificial evolution of thought and a literary cast of style.

Chapman's style is not artificial and literary like Pope's, nor his movement elaborate and self-retarding like the Miltonic movement of Cowper. He is plain-spoken, fresh, vigorous, and, to a certain degree, rapid; and all these are Homeric qualities. I cannot say that I think the movement of his fourteen-syllable line, which has been so much commended, Homeric; but on this point I shall have more to say by and by, when I come to speak of Mr. Newman's exploits. But it is not distinctly anti-Homeric, like the movement of Milton's blank verse; and it has a rapidity of its own. Chapman's diction, too, is generally good, that is, appropriate to Homer; above all, the syntactical character of his style is appropriate. With these merits, what prevents his translation from being a satisfactory version of Homer? Is it merely the want of literal faithfulness to his original, imposed upon him, it is said, by the exigencies of rhyme? Has this celebrated version, which has so many advantages, no other and deeper defect than that? Its author is a poet, and a poet, too, of the Elizabethan age; the golden age of literature, as it is called, and on the whole truly called; for, whatever be the defects of Elizabethan literature (and they are great), we have no development of our literature to compare with it for vigor and richness. This age, too, showed

what it could do in translating by producing a masterpiece — its version of the Bible.

Chapman's translation has often been praised as eminently Homeric. Keats's fine sonnet in its honor every one knows; but Keats could not read the original, and therefore could not really judge the translation. Coleridge, in praising Chapman's version, says at the same time, "It will give you small idea of Homer." But the grave authority of Mr. Hallam pronounces this translation to be "often exceedingly Homeric"; and its latest editor boldly declares that by what, with a deplorable style, he calls "his own innate Homeric genius," Chapman "has thoroughly identified himself with Homer"; and that "we pardon him even for his digressions, for they are such as we feel Homer himself would have written."

I confess that I can never read twenty lines of Chapman's version without recurring to Bentley's cry, "This is not Homer!" and that from a deeper cause than any unfaithfulness occasioned by the fetters of rhyme.

I said that there were four things which eminently distinguished Homer, and with a sense of which Homer's translator should penetrate himself as fully as possible. One of these four things was, the plainness and directness of Homer's ideas. I have just been speaking of the plainness and directness of his style; but the plainness and directness of the contents of his style, of his ideas themselves, is not less remarkable. But as eminently as Homer is plain, so eminently is the Elizabethan literature in general, and Chapman in particular, fanciful. . . .

My limits will not allow me to do more than shortly illustrate, from Chapman's version of the *Iliad*, what I mean when I speak of this vital difference between Homer and an Elizabethan poet in the quality of their thought; between the plain simplicity of the thought of the one, and the curious complexity of the thought of the other. As in Pope's case, I carefully abstain from choosing passages for the express purpose of making Chapman appear ridiculous; Chapman, like Pope, merits in himself all respect, though he too, like Pope, fails to render Homer.

In that tonic speech of Sarpedon, of which I have said so much, Homer, you may remember, has :—

“if indeed, but once *this* battle avoided,  
We were forever to live without growing old and immortal.”

Chapman cannot be satisfied with this, but must add a fancy to it :—

“if keeping back  
Would keep back age from us, and death, and *that we might not wrack  
In this life's human sea at all*”;

and so on. Again : “For well I know this in my mind and in my heart, the day will be when sacred Troy shall perish.” Chapman makes this :—

“And such a *stormy* day shall come, in mind and soul I know,  
When sacred Troy *shall shed her towers, for tears of overthrow.*”

I might go on forever, but I could not give you a better illustration than this last, of what I mean by saying that the Elizabethan poet fails to render Homer because he cannot forbear to interpose a play of thought between his object and its expression. Chapman translates his object into Elizabethan, as Pope translates it into the Augustan of Queen Anne ; both convey it to us through a medium. Homer, on the other hand, sees his object and conveys it to us immediately.

## SECTION II.—ARGUMENTATION.



### EXERCISE XLVI.

#### ARGUMENT FROM SELF-EVIDENT FACTS.

*Subject:*

Groundlessness of Popular Superstitions.



Belief, as we commonly understand the term, is not knowledge. If we could not have the first without the second, considering how very deficient we are in the second, we should be in a deplorable state. For it certainly is well for the average man that he should believe something in order that he may be able to decide and act at all. It is even an open question whether it is not better for the most of us that we should believe what is actually false rather than be in continual harassing doubt. But when knowledge and belief shall be co-extensive, if that time ever comes; when we shall positively know to be true all that we believe to be true; then we shall have reached an ideal state. No less than this are the broad scope and the high purpose of argumentation.

Exposition, we have seen, is concerned with what things *are*—that is, with truth embodied in facts and relations. Argumentation goes a step farther. It not

only seeks to discover truth and impart a knowledge of it, but it further insists that this truth is truth, and strives to enforce a knowledge of it and thus inspire an active belief in it. Men adopt beliefs on the strength of prejudices or of insufficient knowledge. They even come to believe things because they have desired to believe them. These beliefs become second nature and are clung to with a pertinacity which even the disclosure of truth itself sometimes seems unavailing to remove. If it were not so, if men withheld belief until knowledge came, and rested it on that alone, there would be no need for argumentation as we have defined it. Simple exposition would suffice. Exposition is addressed to ignorance which needs enlightenment. Argumentation is addressed to error which needs correction. Argumentation exposes the false as well as the true. It strives to overcome prejudice. Its purpose is thus twofold: it knocks down old error in order to set up new truth.

“To err is human.” The obverse of every advance toward higher wisdom is a deeper sense of the prevalence not only of ignorance but of actual error, until it may well-nigh seem that error is of indigenious growth among men. For it flourishes even in the presence of the most evident and incontrovertible facts. Where this is the case, argument may indeed seem of little avail, for all argument must rest immediately or ultimately on facts. If a Brother Jasper declares that the earth is flat and “the sun do move,” how shall you convince him of the contrary? The gambler may change his cards a dozen times without succeeding in changing his luck, yet, declaring his belief in the charm, will change them the thirteenth time. There is



little encouragement for one to try to meet such obstinacy and such utter disregard of reason by any appeal to facts. Still we make the attempt, and we should make it too without any resort to ridicule until kindness and forbearance have proved unavailing.

Take some of the superstitions of the day and deal with them in the light of facts that are accessible and evident to all. Much the same subject was proposed in the section devoted to exposition. But the intention there was merely to ferret out and explain these superstitions and treat of them in a desultory but entertaining style; the object here is to deal with them rigorously and inquiringly, and to show that they are without ground in easily observable facts.

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## EXERCISE XLVII.

### ARGUMENT BY CAREFUL EXPOSITION.

*Subject:*

Selfishness the Mainspring of Human Action.

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Many an error has arisen and been perpetuated merely through a misunderstanding of the terms involved, due either to ignorance of the facts or to a misinterpretation of them. And many an unpleasant dispute may be avoided if the disputants will only take the trouble at first to make sure that they have a like understanding of the terms in the question, and that they are approaching it from the same point of view. One person declares that a piece of metal is

warm to the touch and another declares that it is cold. They only need to have explained to them that warm and cold are relative terms, and they will understand how both assertions may be right. There is the old story of a dispute over a sign-board which one person declared to be red and another, blue. Had some one suggested that a sign-board has two sides, further trouble might have been saved. Is interest on money, usury? is the taking of interest, extortion? It was held so once, but a clear exposition of the nature of money and of interest has reversed the opinion. Is money, capital? Well, what do we mean by money, and what do we mean by capital? A clear definition of these terms is about all that is needed. The logical process by which the question will then be answered is so simple that it scarcely needs elucidation.

When we find people disposed to argue about things they do not comprehend, or to make declarations of truths when they do not understand the things which the truths concern, it is evident that we shall have to meet them with simple but forcible exposition. Take the old question: When a cart is moving forward does the uppermost portion of the tire of a wheel move faster than the portion on the ground? Put the question to your friends and see how they will argue it. They will never come to an agreement, or at least will not arrive at a correct conclusion, until they settle the meaning of the terms *motion* and *velocity*. Is the one absolute or relative? Is the other calculated from some point absolutely at rest or not? Relatively to the axle, both points are moving with the same velocity. Relatively to the earth, the motion of the

axle may accelerate the velocity of one portion and retard that of another, and so on. Similar is the question, Can a man walk around a monkey when the monkey keeps turning so as to face the man? The only argument necessary is the determination of what is meant by "going around."

Enough has been said perhaps to impress the necessity of first of all clearly defining terms. This necessity is fully apparent in many of the larger questions of the day. In a current number of the *Educational Review* appears an article by Brander Matthews, entitled *Can English Literature Be Taught?* Much of the article is taken up with an exposition of the term *teaching*, and we quote from that portion as follows:

One thing more an American discovers in reading Mr. Collins's pages, and the discovery thus made is confirmed by reading the reviews which the book has had in the British journals—and this is that the custom of examining for honors has obtained so long in Great Britain, and has been carried to such extremes that a confusion has arisen between the end and the means. In other words, British writers on education, like Mr. Collins, and like Mr. Andrew Lang, who reviewed Mr. Collins's book in the *Illustrated London News*, seem no longer able to distinguish between teaching and examining. When Mr. Collins asks the question which stands at the head of this paper and answers it in the affirmative, and when Mr. Lang answers it in the negative, both of them interpret the question to mean "Can English literature be examined on?"

This insistence on examinations, this substitution of one of the instruments of teaching for the teaching itself, this exaltation of the means above the end, has apparently the same result in the universities of England that it has in the public schools of New York City. A strict application of the marking system is little likely to encourage culture either in a university

or in a public school. Narrowness is more easily produced than breadth. . . .

Having in his mind the confusion between teaching and examining which has befogged the whole discussion of the question in England, Mr. E. A. Freeman, the historian, declared against any university teaching of English literature. Mr. Collins quotes Mr. Freeman as writing, "there are many things fit for a man's personal study which are not fit for university examinations. One of these is literature." That literature "cultivates the taste, educates the sympathies, enlarges the mind," Mr. Freeman makes no attempt to deny; "only we cannot examine in tastes and sympathies," is his reply. Now, if this proves anything, it proves too much. It is an argument, not against teaching English literature only, but against teaching Latin literature and Greek literature. But Mr. Freeman and those who hold with him have not yet suggested that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge should give up the teaching of Greek literature.

There is indeed a difference between the teaching of English literature and the teaching of Greek literature. The texts of the great Greek authors, like the texts of the great English authors, may serve for grammatical instruction and for mere linguistic drill; or they may, the ancient as well as the modern, be used to cultivate the taste, educate the sympathy, and enlarge the mind.

Such exposition differs little from exposition pure and simple. Only, it may be made more forcible, considering that it is the handmaid of argument, that it is intended to clear away error as well as enlighten ignorance, that it deals not only with truth as concentered in isolated facts, but also with larger truths as expressive of complex relations between these facts.

It may be well to begin this exercise with the argument of some such simple questions as those alluded to above. The subject offered at the head of the exercise will entail a somewhat abstruse discussion of the term *selfishness*.

## EXERCISE XLVIII.

## INDUCTIVE REASONING.

*Subjects :*

Is the Love of Money the Root of All Evil?—1 *Tim.* vi : 10.

Still Waters Run Deep.

Heat Expands and Cold Contracts.

Undue Glorification of Self-made Men.

The Virtues of Cold Water as a Universal Beverage.

Whatever Is, Is Right.

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Allusion has been made to the fact that many errors are prevalent which a simple appeal to facts is sufficient to expose. If people examined facts in the first place, or at any rate examined large numbers of facts, before they ventured upon broad general statements, they would be saved from many of these errors. The difficulty in the majority of cases is that the process of inductive reasoning has been too hasty or else there has been no such reasoning at all. Perhaps the appearance of a comet in the heavens is accompanied or followed by some great national or other catastrophe on earth. The thoughtless man does not stop to consider that this may be a mere chance coincidence, but assumes that there must be some vital connection between the two events, and immediately upon the appearance of another comet confidently predicts a similar disaster. The thoughtful man on the contrary is not so ready to assume this connection, but waits to see if the coincidence will be observed a second and a third and a tenth time before he will express even a

provisional opinion. He is the inductive reasoner. He recognizes that one instance is not sufficient to prove the existence of a law ; that laws are arrived at only by long observation and careful comparison.

Perhaps on no subject are men so prone to generalize on the strength of a few instances as on the subject of weather, and so we have numberless "weather signs." If the sun shines on a certain day known as "ground-hog day," spring will not open for six weeks. If it rains on Easter Sunday it will rain every Sunday thereafter for seven weeks. "A green Christmas, a white Easter," etc., etc. But the majority of such statements express probabilities only, not laws. Many of them are even counter to probability. Some one has observed them to be true once or twice and taken the rest for demonstrated. To prove their unreliability as general statements we have only to extend the series of observations. A dozen concordant observations do not definitively prove ; one discordant one disproves.

Bearing in mind this last truth, it is usually not very difficult to expose an error which has grown out of imperfect induction. It requires only the same appeal to facts upon which we relied in the last exercise but one. With this difference, however : the kind of error alluded to in that exercise was due to a thoughtless or willful disregard of facts ; the kind of error alluded to here has a certain show of truth because it seems to be supported by facts, the only difficulty being that it is supported by too few of them. The refutation of this last may require an acuteness of perception or a patience in investigation not possessed by many, or it may depend on some fortunate discovery

of one invalidating instance among a host of corroborative ones.

Expose if you can any fallacy expressed or implied in the subjects for discussion offered at the head of this exercise.

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## EXERCISE XLIX.

### INDUCTIVE REASONING (CONTINUED).

#### *Subjects:*

All Dream Images Derived Solely from Waking Sensations.  
Some Relations between Animals and Plants in the Struggle for Existence.

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The kind of argument contemplated in the last exercise was destructive, not constructive. That is, it was devoted to the overthrow of errors that may have arisen from imperfect induction — a matter, we found, often not difficult. The opposite process, like most constructive processes, is not so simple. But let us, if possible, get a clear idea of what induction is, before we attempt to establish any truth by it.

We expose a piece of oak wood to a flame ; it catches fire. We try a piece of hickory, with a similar result. We try ash, maple, pine, mahogany ; in every case the same phenomenon results — ignition. We conclude that wood is ignitable. We subject gold, silver, iron, lead, bismuth, platinum, to heat ; all melt at some temperature or other. We say, metals are fusible. This is inductive reasoning. Logical induction then is the process of discovering general laws — laws which will be found

true throughout entire classes of particulars. These laws are reached only by carefully examining and comparing large numbers of particular instances.

How can we be sure that because twenty metals are fusible, a twenty-first will be? How can we be sure that the laws arrived at by this inductive process will hold true in cases not yet examined? We can not be sure. And herein lies the difference between perfect and imperfect induction. Where all the similar cases that can possibly exist have been examined, then only is the induction perfect and the truth arrived at eternally secure. It may be unassailably true that every state in the United States has a divorce law; it is by no means so certain that every citizen of the United States advocates a divorce law of some kind. So soon as we resort to imperfect induction we render ourselves liable to error. Not only ignorant weather prophets but great scientists and philosophers often go astray here. For a long time astronomers felt practically certain that all the satellites in our system revolved about their planets in the same direction. But satellites of Uranus and Neptune were discovered which revolved in the opposite direction.

And yet we make use of imperfect induction. The great majority of our so-called general truths are founded upon it. Rarely are all the particular instances within our reach. They lie beyond us, in the future, out in the universe, we know not where. Nevertheless, we venture to make general assertions in regard to them on the strength of the instances within our reach. We do so because we know we *may* be right, and because we want some anchorage, even though a temporary one, among the shifting sands of doubt. Scientific induction,



including imperfect induction, is both a legitimate and a valuable means for the extension of knowledge. It is more than that. According to some philosophers it is the only process of reasoning that furnishes us with knowledge at all, and all our knowledge is ultimately due to it.

When the investigation that precedes inductive inference, whether in the world of matter or in the world of thought, is given in detail together with the results and the inferred generalizations, we have one kind of argumentation. Such is our object here: to draw from an array of particular facts a general law or truth, and to present the whole in as convincing a form as may be.

The greatest work that has yet been done in the field of modern science owes its value to the long and patient investigation of facts which preceded every theory the investigator ventured to propound. Note what Darwin says in the introduction to his *Origin of Species*:

When on board H. M. S. "Beagle," as naturalist, I was much struck with certain facts in the distribution of the organic beings inhabiting South America, and in the geological relations of the present to the past inhabitants of that continent. These facts, as will be seen in the latter chapters of this volume, seemed to throw some light on the origin of species—that mystery of mysteries, as it has been called by one of our greatest philosophers. On my return home, it occurred to me, in 1837, that something might perhaps be made out on this question by patiently accumulating and reflecting on all sorts of facts which could possibly have any bearing on it. After five years' work I allowed myself to speculate on the subject, and drew up some short notes; these I enlarged in 1844 into a sketch of the conclusions, which then seemed to me probable: from that period to the present day I have steadily pursued the same object. I hope that I may be excused for entering on these personal details, as I have given them to show that I have not been hasty in coming to a decision.

As an example of the investigator's methods, bearing on one of the subjects given above, read the following from the same book :

I am tempted to give one more instance showing how plants and animals, remote in the scale of nature, are bound together by a web of complex relations. I shall hereafter have occasion to show that the exotic *Lobelia fulgens* is never visited in my garden by insects, and consequently, from its peculiar structure, never sets a seed. Nearly all our orchidaceous plants absolutely require the visits of insects to remove their pollen-masses and thus to fertilize them. I find from experiment that humble-bees are almost indispensable to the fertilization of the heartsease (*Viola tricolor*), for other bees do not visit this flower. I have also found that the visits of bees are necessary for the fertilization of some kinds of clover : for instance, 20 heads of Dutch clover (*Trifolium repens*) yielded 2290 seeds, but 20 other heads protected from bees produced not one. Again, 100 heads of red clover (*T. pratense*) produced 2700 seeds, but the same number of protected heads produced not a single seed. Humble-bees alone visit red clover, as other bees cannot reach the nectar. It has been suggested that moths may fertilize the clovers ; but I doubt whether they could do so in the case of the red clover, from their weight not being sufficient to depress the wing-petals. Hence we may infer as highly probable that, if the whole genus of humble-bees became extinct or very rare in England, the heartsease and red clover would become very rare, or wholly disappear. The number of humble-bees in any district depends in a great measure on the number of field-mice, which destroy their combs and nests ; and Col. Newman, who has long attended to the habits of humble-bees, believes that "more than two-thirds of them are thus destroyed all over England." Now the number of mice is largely dependent, as every one knows, on the number of cats ; and Col. Newman says, "Near villages and small towns I have found the nests of humble-bees more numerous than elsewhere, which I attribute to the number of cats that destroy the mice." Hence it is quite credible that the presence of a feline animal in large numbers in a district might

determine, through the intervention first of mice and then of bees, the frequency of certain flowers in that district !

A few lines, further on, will give a hint of work still to be done in a direction in which the student may get interesting results well worth recording :

The difference in the length of the corolla in the two kinds of clover, which determines the visits of the hive-bee, must be very trifling ; for I have been assured that when red clover has been mown, the flowers of the second crop are somewhat smaller, and that these are visited by many hive-bees. I do not know whether this statement is accurate ; nor whether another published statement can be trusted, namely, that the Ligurian bee, which is generally considered a mere variety of the common hive-bee, and which freely crosses with it, is able to reach and suck the nectar of the red clover.

In the treatment of the first subject given above, make a record of your dreams, tracing everything in them as far as possible to some experience or impression of waking life. Appeal also to the experience of your friends.

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## EXERCISE L.

### DEDUCTIVE REASONING.

#### *Subjects :*

Shakespeare the Product of His Age.

An Early Change in the Government of Russia Inevitable.

Reasons why Human Slavery should not be Tolerated.

The Successful Man.

John Brown, Hero.

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There is a process of reasoning just the reverse of that with which we have been dealing. Given the

general law for a class of objects or instances, we can proceed to apply it to any particular object or instance in the class. If all men are mortal, one man is mortal, and if I am a man I am mortal. If copper is a conductor of electricity and if lightning is electricity, then copper is a conductor of lightning. These are examples of *deduction*. Let us put them in the form of what is known in logic as a syllogism :

Major premise : All men are mortal.

Minor premise : James is a man.

Conclusion : James is mortal.

Electricity is conductible by copper.

Lightning is electricity.

Therefore, lightning is conductible by copper.

It must be at once evident to all that these conclusions are indisputably correct—that is, if the premises are. The deductive process in itself is not open to the objection which the inductive process is open to, for it does not go beyond the limits with which it begins. But there may be some question in regard to those limits. We must have premises in order to draw a conclusion. Those premises are established by induction ; if by imperfect induction, there is a possibility of their being untrue ; and if they are not true the conclusion itself may be false. Thus, by observing the satellites of Jupiter, Saturn, and the Earth, astronomers had at one time concluded that the satellites of our planetary system revolve from west to east. They could therefore very well infer that if Uranus was attended by any satellites they revolved from west to east. Uranus is attended by a number of satellites, but they revolve from east to west. The induction

had been imperfect, and as it happens, incorrect; and the inference, though drawn by a correct process, was also incorrect.

The danger from this source is twofold. Not only may the one premise which asserts a general truth of a class be false, but the other which assigns an individual to that class may also be false. Suppose we say: All oaks have simple leaves; the poison-oak is an oak; therefore the poison-oak has simple leaves. Our conclusion is false, not because the deductive process of reasoning is fallacious but because the second premise is fallacious: the poison-oak is not a member of the oak-family at all.

Of course we go on making deductive inferences, and trusting them too. If now and then one turns out to be wrong we go back and examine our premises, and if we discover a false induction, that is so much gained; the discovery of an error always brings us so much nearer the truth.

The great body of argumentative literature is founded upon deductive reasoning. Rarely however in composition do we employ anything so formal as the complete syllogism. Here is one example from Matthew Arnold: "Genius is mainly an affair of energy, and poetry is mainly an affair of genius; therefore, a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be eminent in poetry." But nearly always one of the premises is unexpressed; sometimes the inference itself is not drawn. When we say, "The treatise will not be popular because it is so abstract," we trust to everybody to supply the premise, "Abstract treatises are not popular."

Take the following arguments, supply the missing premises, and construct complete syllogisms :

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.—  
*Matt. v: 7.*

Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty.— William Mathews.

It is true, no doubt, that a man's immediate ancestors must be supposed to have most influence on his character, and that Byron's immediate ancestors were far from being quiet, respectable people.— W. Minto.

In writing an essay of this kind remember that the conclusion may be reached through a long series of deductions. Avoid, in general, the formal syllogism. Follow any order. For example, you may tell what John Brown did and then show that such actions, by whomsoever performed, are essentially heroic; or you may begin by defining heroism and then show that John Brown's actions partook of its characteristics. The argument for the downfall of monarchy may be based on the growing love of freedom and the greater courage in the assertion of individual rights. The whole process is simply this: we go back to broad truths and then make a special application of them.

Read the following inquiry into the cause of the popularity of *Childe Harold*, by William Minto, *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

It has often been asked what was the cause of the instantaneous and wide-spread popularity of *Childe Harold*, which Byron himself so well expressed in the saying, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." Chief among the secondary causes was the warm sympathy between the poet and his readers, the direct interest of his theme for the time. In the spring of 1812 England was in the very crisis of a struggle for existence. It was just before

Napoleon set out for Moscow. An English army was standing on the defensive in Portugal, with difficulty holding its own; the nation was trembling for its safety. The dreaded Bonaparte's next movement was uncertain; it was feared that it might be against our own shores. Rumor was busy with alarms. All through the country men were arming and drilling for self-defence. The heart of England was beating high with patriotic resolution.

What were our poets doing in the midst of all this? Scott, then at the head of the tuneful brotherhood in popular favor, was celebrating the exploits of William of Deloraine and Marmion.

. . . Southey was floundering in the dim sea of Hindu mythology. Rogers was content with his *Pleasures of Memory*. . . Moore confined himself to political squibs and wanton little lays for the boudoir. It was no wonder that, when at last a poet did appear whose impulses were not merely literary, who felt in what century he was living, whose artistic creations were throbbing with the life of his own age, a crowd at once gathered to hear the new singer. There was not a parish in Great Britain in which there was not some household that had a direct personal interest in the scene of the pilgrim's travels — "some friend, some brother there." The effect was not confined to England; Byron at once had all Europe as his audience, because he spoke to them on a theme in which they were all deeply concerned. He spoke to them, too, in language which was not merely a naked expression of their most intense feelings; the spell by which he held them was all the stronger that he lifted them with the irresistible power of his song above the passing anxieties of the moment. Loose and rambling as Childe Harold is, it yet had for the time an unconscious art; it entered the absorbing tumult of a hot and feverish struggle, and opened a way in the dark clouds gathering over the combatants through which they could see the blue vault and the shining stars. . . . In that terrible time of change, when every state in Europe was shaken to its foundation, there was a profound meaning in placing before men's eyes the departed greatness of Greece; it rounded off the troubled scene with dramatic propriety. Even the mournful scepticism of Childe Harold was not resented at a time when it lay at the root of every heart to ask, Is there a God in heaven to see such desolation, and withhold His hand?

## EXERCISE LI.

## DEDUCTIVE REASONING (CONTINUED).

*Subjects:*

Fallacies of Democracy.      The Malthusian Doctrine.  
Mistakes of Epicurus.

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Let us consider some methods of overthrowing arguments founded on deductive reasoning. We have already noticed that there are two possibilities of error because the conclusion must be drawn from two premises either one of which may be wrong. The premises therefore need close scrutiny first of all. But there is still a third possibility of error, even granting that the premises are correct:—an unwarrantable conclusion may be drawn. We said that the deductive process is an absolutely correct one. So it is. So are many mathematical processes—the process for instance by which we extract the cube root of numbers. But nevertheless we sometimes make mistakes in following out the process and so arrive at incorrect results. In many a deductive argument, if we go over it carefully, we shall find that there has been a mistake in the process.

Suppose we say

All wood is ignitable ;  
Hickory is ignitable ;  
Therefore hickory is wood.

Are the premises correct? Yes. Is the conclusion correct? Yes. But is the process, the deduction,



correct? No. The conclusion therefore is unwarranted and not to be depended upon. As a statement it may chance to be correct (as in this instance), but it is not a correct conclusion to draw, for by the same process a very incorrect conclusion may be arrived at, thus :

All wood is ignitable ;  
Gas is ignitable ;  
Therefore gas is wood.

The difficulty is that we have not denied that other things besides wood may also be ignitable. We have said nothing whatever about *all* ignitable things and therefore we are not warranted in saying anything whatever about any *one* of them. We have, however, said something about all woods, and we can therefore draw a conclusion about any particular wood, thus :

All wood is ignitable ;  
Hickory is wood ;  
Therefore hickory is ignitable.

And this will be found correct in every particular.

Examine the following arguments for fallacies, and if possible make correct syllogisms of them :

Induction is a process of reasoning ;  
Induction furnishes us with knowledge ;  
Therefore processes of reasoning furnish us with knowledge.

Induction is the only process of reasoning that furnishes us with knowledge ;  
Therefore, all our knowledge is due to induction.

All liquids are vaporizable ;  
Gold is not a liquid ;  
Therefore gold is not vaporizable.

Nothing is better than wisdom ;  
Bread is better than nothing ;  
Therefore, bread is better than wisdom.

It is no part of our work here to examine the various fallacies of reasoning and distinguish them and give them names. That belongs to logic. It must suffice for us to recognize the fact that they exist in many disguises, and to be on our guard against them, both in ourselves and in others. After all, they invariably do violence to the axiomatic truths which lie at the foundation of all reason, and every man's "common sense" will generally be sufficient to detect them.

In this exercise our object again is rather destructive — to expose the fallacy of an argument that involves false deduction. It may be as good practice as any to attempt to overthrow some of the arguments advanced on subjects in the last exercise, to show that John Brown was not a hero, or that slavery is an institution to be upheld. These are questions with two sides, and it may well be that fallacies can be detected in the arguments advanced on one side. Or take one of the other subjects. Suppose it has been represented that the era of peace supervening after the crisis of some great political or religious strife fosters the development of literary genius ; that the age of Queen Elizabeth was such an era in the national history of England ; that Shakespeare lived in that age ; that his genius was of the highest order ; that the genius of Shakespeare was therefore the product of his time. If this argument is closely examined it will be found fallacious in several points.

## EXERCISE LII.

## EVIDENCE.

*Subjects :*

The Character of Columbus.

Was the Assassinator of President Garfield Insane?

Evidence for or against a Belief in Rhabdomancy ; Spiritualism ;  
Conservation of Energy ; Inoculation for Disease.

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Evidence is a general name for everything that is adduced to corroborate a fact or support a thesis. It may be material objects, such as are often exhibited in trials before courts of law. It may be oral or written testimony of witnesses. It may be a combination of circumstances that seem to admit of only one explanation. It may be an expression of opinion by some one who is an expert in the matter under discussion and whose words therefore carry weight. All of these may be elaborated into an argument which may be deemed by the hearer or reader to establish conclusive proof. But the evidence in itself is not necessarily proof.

Each of these kinds of evidence will have a different force and validity, which must be taken into account. For instance, what is called in law "circumstantial evidence" may be exceedingly strong and convincing, and yet many a conclusion drawn from it has afterward been found wrong. The value of verbal testimony depends very much on the intelligence, moral character, and disinterestedness of the witness who offers it. Authority, or the judgment of experts in matters of opinion, will vary greatly in value.

Take the matter of testimony. What can be better than the truthful testimony of an unprejudiced eye-witness? And yet our eyes, and all our senses, are continually deceiving us. A child riding on a train fancies that the fences are flying past him; a man of wide experience and matured judgment often finds it difficult to determine whether or not a train is moving, past which he is being carried on another train. Clouds seem to be moving in opposite directions when in reality one stratum is simply moving faster than another in the same direction. An object is blue, green, or even red, to different people. The same man is described by one person as tall, by another as of medium stature; one says his eyes are black, another that they are brown. And all of these witnesses may feel confident that they are telling the truth. Evidence, we repeat, even the best of evidence, is not proof. Hence the necessity of bringing to bear every scrap of evidence obtainable. The weaving of it into a strong mesh of proof exercises the highest skill of the philosopher, the historian, the scientific demonstrator, the legal advocate. In short, it is the utilization of all the resources of argument.

It will be noticed that the subjects offered thus far have often been put in the form of questions. There are several good reasons for this. The reader will understand at once that the paper is to be argumentative and that the question is an unsettled one in the minds of many people. The interrogative form, too, seems to promise greater fairness of treatment on the writer's part. His answer may be an unqualified Yes or No, but he assumes to start at least from a neutral standpoint and with a spirit of sincere inquiry. The result

is that the reader's interest is aroused at once, his attention to the arguments is more willingly given, and his concurrence with the results more ready.

So far as it is possible in these exercises, argue local questions. Has there been a fire in your neighborhood recently which was suspected to be of incendiary origin? Is there a suspicion that the late acts of vandalism on the school grounds were committed by persons not connected with the school? Ferret out all the evidence you can and present it in a convincing form.

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### EXERCISE LIII.

#### DEBATE.

##### *Questions of Fact:*

*Resolved,* That there was a pre-Columbian Discovery of America.

That the American Indians are Descended from the Mound Builders.

That Lord Bacon Wrote the Works Attributed to Shakespeare.

That Crime Increases with Civilization.

That Earthquakes are Caused by the Cooling and Contraction of the Earth's Crust.

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Debate is argumentation on both or all sides of a question, usually conducted by two or more persons, each of whom represents one side. It is presumably the best way of arriving at truth and settling unsettled questions. It has often been skeptically remarked that debate convinces nobody. This is true only of those who will not see, of whom it has been said that there

are none so blind. Daily does it become more and more evident that among intelligent, fair-minded men and women debate is a valuable means for the formation of opinions. When one argues a question alone, from his own point of view, he should of course try to concede everything that may be said from the opposite point of view. But it is not likely that he will find so much to say on the other side nor support it so strongly as one whose convictions lie on that side. Hence the advantage of having several parties to the discussion. They may not succeed in convincing one another, but they will certainly help an unprejudiced non-participator to a conviction.

While debates are commonly oral, as in debating societies, political, educational, and religious gatherings, law courts, parliamentary sessions, etc., they are by no means always so. Many are to be found in our magazines of a certain class, *The North American Review*, *Popular Science Monthly*, *Forum*, *Arena*. It naturally devolves on the one who opens the debate to clear the ground by stating the question in full, with all necessary amplification, exposition of terms, proposed limitations, etc. His arguments, too, will be constructive and positive. Of course he is at liberty to anticipate counter arguments, objections and refutations. Such a course will tend to weaken the force of those arguments when they are brought forward by an opponent. On the other hand, there is the risk that it may be only so much wasted energy, for an opponent may choose not to advance the argument or objection at all, though if he does this simply because he feels that its force has been already weakened, the energy can hardly be considered

wasted. The duty of those who follow the first speaker or writer is, primarily, to refute the arguments advanced by the other side; and, secondarily, to establish the contrary. This latter is not always considered essential; it depends somewhat on the purpose of the discussion and the form in which the question is stated.

As to the form of the so-called "question," it is usually a declarative proposition and not an interrogation. This makes it easier to distinguish clearly between the affirmative and negative sides, the one affirming the truth of the proposition, the other denying it. The burden of proof lies with the affirmative. Three courses are open to the negative. The simplest one is merely to attempt to refute all the arguments offered in support and so leave the statement unproved. Or one may attack the statement itself, and, if possible, show it to be false, thus disproving it. The third course is to maintain the truth of some contrary proposition. This last is practically opening a new question and arguing on the affirmative side of it,—a question however which, proved, disproves the first. All three of these courses may be adopted in the same argument, though there is always more or less danger in attempting to prove too much.

The question is not only usually declarative in form, it should be put positively, — that is, it should not contain a negative, for this is apt to lead to comparison between the terms "affirmative side" and "negative side." Thus, instead of saying Resolved, That Prohibition does not Prohibit, or Resolved, That Prohibition is a Failure, cast it in some such form as this, Resolved, That Prohibitory Laws can be and are Enforced.

The questions offered for debate in this exercise are questions of fact. They must be argued by references to observation and experience, by appeals to historical records, to statistics, and the like. The writers on the negative side should be furnished, if not with the entire paper, at least with an outline of the arguments of the affirmative side. Merely as practice in dialectics and as a help toward attaining the philosophical attitude of fairness and tolerance, it will be found profitable occasionally to defend a side which you do not really believe in. But the most effective work will always be done in defense of the cause you cherish.

Here again select questions of local and present interest if possible.

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### EXERCISE LIV.

#### DEBATE (CONTINUED).

##### *Questions of Opinion:*

*Resolved*, That Benedict Arnold's Action at West Point was Excusable.

That More Restrictive Immigration Laws would be to the Best Interest of the United States.

That Beauty is Its Own Excuse for Being.

That Vivisection is Justifiable.

That the Prosperity of Our Government is Threatened more by Centralization than by Disintegration.

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Vast numbers of questions of fact remain unsettled, — historical, geographical, astronomical, biological. So long as they are admittedly unsettled they are subjects for investigation and not for argumentation. It is only



when they have been considered settled by some while others dissent, or by all until something is discovered which reopens the question, that there is occasion for debating them. For then there will be strong arguments to meet and prejudices to overcome. The Swiss, for example, are loth to let the story of William Tell's heroism be relegated from the authenticity of history to the obscurity of myth and legend. And Kopernik and his followers had need to argue, and to argue persistently, before they could hope that the world would give up the Ptolemaic theory of the universe.

But after all, the great majority of debates center about matters of opinion, questions not of what things are but of what they ought to be, questions of good or bad, of right or wrong, of prudence and expediency. Shall a college student be allowed to elect his studies? Shall a public man be judged by his private life? Is democracy a sound political principle? Is a lie ever justifiable? Is there any absolute standard of morality? These are the questions that continually exercise us and call forth all our resources for attack and defense. There is nothing so provocative of debate as the knowledge that some one holds an opinion at variance with our own. We even dispute about tastes in spite of the old inhibition, which has a grain of sound sense back of it.

Let us admit that debate on matters of opinion is all right. Uniformity, among all individuals, of capabilities, acquirements, and tastes, would be no more desirable than uniformity in facial features and expression. But harmony of sentiment in such matters as we have alluded to above is in the main desirable. To bring

about this harmony should be the praiseworthy object of all debate.

Debaters must be particularly on their guard here against a danger which has already been pointed out (Exercise XLVII.)—that of beginning with a misunderstanding of terms. In questions of fact or of the relations between facts this danger hardly exists; but in questions of the relations that do or should exist between concepts we have to deal with terms of a much more indefinite character and therefore much less likely to be clearly understood. It is of the utmost importance that any obscurities on this point be first removed.

Besides this danger there is a difficulty often met with on the very threshold of these discussions—due to what may be styled the personal equation. It consists, not in a misunderstanding of the terms involved, but in a difference of understanding or even a radical disagreement in regard to their meaning. The same word may mean one thing to you and another to me, or what you may call by one name I may prefer to call by a very different name. This is due to many things,—different training, different standards, different beliefs. If such a disagreement exists at the very starting-point and is not recognized, the discussion is bound to be unfruitful. It would manifestly be useless for two persons to debate upon the question of Cæsar's patriotism unless they had practically the same idea as to what patriotism consists in. In short, one question of opinion may depend upon another; that other then must be settled first. Suppose we consider the question as to the morality of Queen Elizabeth's principles. Now we are told that to Queen Elizabeth a falsehood

was "simply an intellectual means of meeting a difficulty." Our question cannot be settled until we settle the question whether lying is justifiable or consistent with morality. And that may depend on our answer to the still more fundamental question, Is there any absolute standard of morality? Beware of discussing any question of opinion until you are sure there is a unity of sentiment on all questions underlying it.

We have said that the real object of discussions of this class should be to bring about a final harmony of opinion. This being the purpose it almost goes without saying that debates should be conducted with the utmost candor, courtesy, and liberality. Nothing is to be gained by any other course, while everything is to be lost.

We append here the opening of an argument by Prof. Andrew F. West in the *North American Review* for February, 1884: —

#### MUST THE CLASSICS GO?

Is classical training necessary in liberal education? To appreciate this question we must first know what education means. Every man is born into this world ignorant both of himself and his surroundings, but to act his part so as to reach success and happiness needs to understand them both. Therefore, he must learn; and, having to learn, must be educated. This will involve two processes: —

1. The development of man's power to master himself and circumstances by training every capacity to its highest energy -- discipline.

2. Communication of the most valuable knowledge -- information.

Both are necessary. Discipline precedes information, because power precedes acquisition. Information completes discipline by

yielding actual results in the world. In a word, discipline gives power to acquire information, and the total result is culture.

The two great instruments of educational discipline and information have hitherto been mathematics and language, leading to physical, intellectual, and social sciences, and these again culminating in a philosophy or study of first principles of all things. On this basis our college education has been built. None propose excluding mathematics. Few question the need of studying language in some form. But when the classical languages are proposed as essential to liberal education, objections arise and pronounced attacks are made. I propose merely three things:—

- I. To enumerate the objectors and answer their objections.
- II. To state the positive argument for classical training.
- III. To state the reasons for retaining Greek as well as Latin.

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## EXERCISE LV.

### DEBATE (CONTINUED).

#### *Questions of Probability:*

*Resolved,* That a Great European War is Inevitable.

That Canada will be Annexed to the United States  
within Twenty-five Years.

That Mars is Inhabited.

That Electricity was Known to the Ancients.

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“Probability is the very guide of life,” said Bishop Butler. You linger a little longer over your book because you think it probable that by walking fast you will still have time to catch the train. You plant a tree because you think it probable that it will grow up to bear fruit and that you will live to reap the benefit. You refuse to invest your money in certain stocks be-

cause you think it improbable that they will ever pay dividends. You part from your dearest friend with a smile because you think it extremely improbable that anything will prevent your meeting again on the day appointed. Questions of probability are something more than a mathematician's pastime.

Many questions of fact, past and present, far and near, have not yet been settled, and may never be settled beyond a certain degree of probability. But there is another class of questions which we do not hope to settle beyond a degree of probability. Not because they do not involve facts, but because we recognize that the facts are beyond our reach, or because we know that the future alone will determine them, while our interest in them is purely a present one. For instance, we are content for the present to speculate upon the probable internal structure of the earth. Perhaps some day a serious attempt will be made to arrive at the facts. Again, we are confronted with the question of what the weather will be to-morrow. Now, it will either rain or not rain, but we cannot wait to learn the fact; and we may not be half so much interested in knowing the fact when it comes as we are now in knowing the probability, for now only can we decide the question whether we shall go on our journey provided with an umbrella or not. Governing our present action by the probability we make up our minds to accept the future fact with as little concern as possible.

How do we determine the probability, or, as we often say, the chances, that a thing is thus and thus or that an event will happen in a certain manner? By observation and experience, by induction and deduction.

Every imperfect induction is merely the expression of a probability. Every deduction carried beyond the range of actual experience is likewise only a probability.

There is another phase of this matter. There is a principle of reasoning, how obtained we cannot discuss here, which declares that "we must treat equals equally, and what we know of one case may be affirmed of every case resembling it in the necessary circumstances." Of course experiment may be necessary to determine whether things are equal or not, but starting with this principle we calculate probabilities without experimentation. Indeed in many cases the experiment proves nothing whatever in regard to future results,—it only proves the principle. I toss a penny into the air. It has two sides and so far as I know they are equal. I know it will fall upon one side or the other. The other conditions I do not know and can not control, and so I say that there is only an even chance that the head will fall uppermost. Suppose it falls so. I conclude nothing whatever from that in regard to the manner in which it will fall a second time. Suppose I toss it up ten times and the head comes up five times, the tail five times, can I reason that it will be so the next ten times? Not at all. I know, each time I toss it, that there is an even chance of the head coming uppermost. Therefore it is entirely possible that it will come uppermost ten times in succession. But because the chances *are* even I say that such a result, though possible, is improbable; that it is most probable that head and tail will each come uppermost five times; that the next greatest probability is that one will come uppermost six times and the other four; that it is most

improbable that either one will come up ten times in succession. By such laws of mere probability, without any degree of certainty whatever, are we compelled to determine a thousand acts of our everyday life. Though often a matter of mathematical computation, serious errors have been made and there is room for argument even here.

There is still more room for argument in cases that are not susceptible of mathematical demonstration. Take a prophecy, as for example that the world will come to an end next week or in the year 2000, or let some member of the class write a prophecy, and then debate upon the probability of its being fulfilled. Or take any current newspaper report that is of a surprising or sensational nature and argue from antecedent probabilities that it is or is not true. Argumentative exercises of this nature may be made extremely interesting and instructive.





## SECTION III.—PERSUASION:

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### EXERCISE LVI.

#### PERSUASIVE DISCOURSE IN GENERAL.

*Subjects :*

Have We a Code of Honor?

Secrets of Success.

The American Flag.

Complete Living.

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“Conduct is three-fourths of life,” says Matthew Arnold. Another amends this and says, “Conduct is the whole of life.” Living means something more than being ; it means something more than knowing or believing ; it means action, conduct, behavior. The man who knows without acting upon that knowledge is as censurable as the man who acts without knowledge. And what does the Apostle James say of faith without works ?

The office of persuasive discourse is to arouse men to action. Exposition, we said, presupposes some degree of ignorance on the part of those addressed, and argumentation presupposes error. Persuasion presupposes indifference, inaction, or misdirected action ; it appeals to the emotions, the feelings. Strange as it seems, we may know a truth, we may firmly believe it to be truth, and yet fail to take it home to ourselves, to act upon it,

to live it, to concrete it, as it were, in our daily conduct. We know it, we say, but we fail to *realize* it. Thus we know that the earth is an immense sphere whirling through space at a high velocity, but only seldom do we realize it, and it may be questioned whether some who know the fact ever realize it at all in the sense in which the astronomer does. In like manner we know, every one of us, as positively as we know anything, that sooner or later we shall die, but only at rare intervals does that fact present itself to us in its full significance. We speak of it and write of it a hundred times to once that we act upon it. And so we know a thousand things with a sort of uncomprehending knowledge, a knowledge that leads to nothing. Strange inharmony of the human intellect and will! Stagnation is death, we say; and yet we stagnate unconcernedly while we shudder at and shrink from and rebel against death. Disobedience to the laws of health is slow suicide;— we do not for a moment question the truth of that; and yet we go on disobeying those laws day after day like ignoramuses or skeptics. But we are neither one nor the other for we know and we believe; we simply will not act— we are fools.

Manifestly there is a field for Persuasion, and manifestly, too, of all the various forms of literary art this may be made the most practical and helpful. It will be no mistaken endeavor to turn in this direction all the knowledge and power we have gained by our previous practice, to concentrate it upon this, the supreme achievement of literary labor.

No model will be given here. It may be noticed that what has just been written, though ostensibly exposi-

tory, is largely persuasive in character. But it was written without any consciousness of an attempt to make it such. If it has been read with the same unconsciousness so much the better. If it has in the slightest degree inspired you to act, to write, to attempt in particular to persuade others to act upon their knowledge and beliefs in a thousand matters of everyday life, then it has not been written in vain.

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## EXERCISE LVII.

### PERSUASION BY APPEAL TO PERSONAL INTEREST.

*Subjects:*

Why do I Need Exercise?

With All Thy Getting Get Understanding. — Prov. iv : 7.

Self-Preservation is Nature's First Law.

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Motives of private and personal interest are confessedly determinative in most of our ordinary deliberations and actions. They are doubtless stronger with some than with others, and it is often difficult to say just how far a man shall let these considerations carry him without laying his action open to the charge of selfishness. There is a degree of egoism, a selfishness if you will, that few of us presume to blame. Philosophers have declared that self-preservation is our first duty. And who would find fault with a man for seeking self-culture and self-advancement?

Persuasion that would accomplish its end by appeals to these motives must be founded upon a study and

knowledge of human nature. We must know the people to whom we appeal and we must vary our appeals to suit their various interests. The skillful politician works on one man's feelings through his pride, on another's through his love of independence, on another's through his avarice. Of course these appeals are often made with unworthy ends in view. It is only when the object is a worthy one that they are justifiable. Nor does that mean to say that a worthy end will justify any means whatsoever, but that the particular means contemplated here can scarcely be open to great objection. At the worst it is only taking advantage of men's faults for their own and others' good. If a man notoriously fond of ease and inaction can be roused to action by playing upon that very weakness, where is the harm? And besides that, as we have said, there are many kinds and degrees of egoistic desires that cannot be called faults.

Here is a case in point. A certain student was injuring his health by too severe mental work supplemented by too little physical exercise. On the score of health his friends expostulated with him in vain. But when it was represented to him that if he would devote one-tenth of his time to exercise he would accomplish more and better work in the remaining nine-tenths than he could otherwise accomplish in the whole time, he was willing to make the experiment. Thus his friends effected that in which they were chiefly interested by holding forth an inducement of a very different character—the only one that appealed to the student's self-interest as he was pleased to consider it.

That is one of the secrets of effective persuasion. Another is this. If you venture to appeal to a motive so conspicuously selfish as to be unworthy, you must either conceal the fact that you think it unworthy or else in some way ingeniously conceal the fact that you are appealing to the motive at all. But there is always the danger that ingenuity even in a good cause may descend to artifice, and though such methods are freely employed in high places they are not always to be recommended. Self-respect should be maintained at any price, and if there is no other way of effecting an object except by an appeal to base motives it may be better in the end to leave the object uneffected.

A delicate way of persuading others is to pretend to be persuading yourself. The subject "Why do I Need Exercise?" suggests this method of procedure. In any case the address need not be direct. A case may be assumed and the person addressed be trusted to see the similarity between his own case and the assumed one. Fables and parables are commonly constructed on this plan. Or direct address may be deemed the most cogent. The method pursued must depend on the time, the person, the nature of the appeal. The prime requisites are tact and the ability to read character and to divine motives.

#### MODEL.

#### A PLEA FOR MORE GENERAL INSTRUCTION IN PHYSIOLOGY.

If anyone doubts the importance of an acquaintance with the fundamental principles of physiology as a means to complete living, let him look around and see how many men and women he can find in middle or later life who are thoroughly well. Occa-

sionally only do we meet with an example of vigorous health continued to old age ; hourly do we meet with examples of acute disorder, chronic ailment, general debility, premature decrepitude. Scarcely is there one to whom you put the question, who has not, in the course of his life, brought upon himself illnesses which a little knowledge would have saved him from. Here is a case of heart disease consequent on a rheumatic fever that followed reckless exposure. There is a case of eyes spoiled for life by overstudy. Yesterday the account was of one whose long-enduring lameness was brought on by continuing, spite of the pain, to use a knee after it had been slightly injured. And to-day we are told of another who has had to lie by for years, because he did not know that the palpitation he suffered from resulted from overtaxed brain. Now we hear of an irremediable injury that followed some silly feat of strength ; and, again, of a constitution that has never recovered from the effects of excessive work needlessly undertaken. While on all sides we see the perpetual minor ailments which accompany feebleness. Not to dwell on the natural pain, the weariness, the gloom, the waste of time and money thus entailed, only consider how greatly ill-health hinders the discharge of all duties — makes business often impossible and always more difficult ; produces an irritability fatal to the right management of children ; puts the functions of citizenship out of the question, and makes amusement a bore. Is it not clear that the physical sins — partly our forefathers' and partly our own — which produce this ill-health, deduct more from complete living than anything else, and to a great extent make life a burden instead of a benefaction and a pleasure ?

To all of which add the fact that life, besides being thus immensely deteriorated, is also cut short. It is not true, as we commonly suppose, that a disorder or a disease from which we have recovered leaves us as before. No disturbance of the normal course of the functions can pass away and leave things exactly as they were. In all cases a permanent damage is done — not immediately appreciable, it may be, but still there ; and, along with other such items which Nature in her strict account-keeping never drops, will tell against us to the inevitable shortening of our days. Through the accumulations of small injuries it is that constitu-

tions are commonly undermined, and break down, long before their time. And if we call to mind how far the average duration of life falls below the possible duration, we see how immense is the loss. When, to the numerous partial deductions which bad health entails, we add this great final deduction, it results that, ordinarily, more than one-half of life is thrown away.

Hence, knowledge which subserves direct self-preservation by preventing this loss of health, is of primary importance. We do not contend that possession of such knowledge would by any means wholly remedy the evil. For it is clear that in our present phase of civilization men's necessities often compel them to transgress. And it is clear further that, even in the absence of such compulsion, their inclinations would frequently lead them, spite of their knowledge, to sacrifice future good to present gratification. But we do contend that the right knowledge impressed in the right way would effect much; and we further contend that as the laws of health must be recognized before they can be fully conformed to, the imparting of such knowledge must precede more rational living — come when that may. We infer that as vigorous health and its accompanying high spirits are larger elements of happiness than any other things whatever, the teaching how to maintain them is a teaching that yields in moment to no other whatever. And, therefore, we assert that such a course of physiology as is needful for the comprehension of its general truths, and their bearings on daily conduct, is an all-essential part of a rational education.

Strange that the assertion should need making! Stranger still that it should need defending! Yet there are not a few by whom such a proposition will be received with something approaching to derision. Men who would blush if caught saying *Iphigénia* instead of *Iphigenia*, or would resent as an insult any imputation of ignorance respecting the fabled labors of a fabled demi-god, show not the slightest shame in confessing that they do not know where the Eustachian tubes are, what are the actions of the spinal cord, what is the normal rate of pulsation, or how the lungs are inflated. While anxious that their sons should be well up in the superstitions of two thousand years ago, they care not that they should be taught anything about the structure and functions of

their own bodies — nay, would even disapprove such instruction. So overwhelming is the influence of established routine ! So terribly in our education does the ornamental override the useful ! —  
*Herbert Spencer.*

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## EXERCISE LVIII.

### PERSUASION BY APPEAL TO SOCIAL DUTY.

#### *Subjects :*

- A Soft Answer Turneth Away Wrath. — Prov. xv : 1.
  - Cultivate Courtesy.
  - The Exercise of Intelligence in Voting.
  - Shall We Foster the Spirit of Patriotism ?
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Few if any of us live entirely to ourselves ; we may not therefore live entirely for ourselves. As long as we continue to be the sociable creatures we are and take pleasure in human companionship, so long shall we recognize that there are certain duties which we owe to others in addition to the duties which we owe to ourselves. And just in proportion as any man conceives of this altruistic duty as paramount to the egoistic one is he hailed as philanthropist, public benefactor, patriot, hero, martyr. To say that the selfish ambition to shine in these roles is in all cases the leading motive is to malign human nature, to make men out more selfish than some of the lower animals. These social duties are as a rule cheerfully performed and quite as often from instinct as from training and habit. They range from the unwritten laws of courtesy that are observed in our everyday intercourse to the codes which



bind together into one political and social organization entire communities and nations.

We recognize these duties and are in the main willing to fulfill them. And yet, as with so many other things, we sometimes fail to realize them fully; or we have a wrong conception of them; or we neglect and forget them. Hence the necessity of frequent and and strong reminders, and hence the need of reformers and reforms.

When an appeal is made to social duty there is no need of concealing the fact, for if one kind of action is more generally looked upon as praiseworthy than another it is the one in which no shadow of self-interest is discernible. The nature of the appeal will differ somewhat according to circumstances and object. It may be that we have unconsciously lapsed from a strict observance of a plain duty and simply need a timely reminder. It may be that we are insensible to the exigencies or the merits of the case and need to be enlightened and aroused. It may be that through a misunderstanding of our duty we are wasting good intentions in the wrong direction and need to be set right. It may be that new conditions bring with them new obligations which we need to have presented to us clearly and cogently.

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## EXERCISE LIX.

### PERSUASION BY APPEAL TO RELIGIOUS DUTY.

#### *Subjects:*

Virtue Its Own Reward.	The Sacredness of Life.
The Spirit of Intolerance.	Lack of Reverence in American
Cruelty to Animals.	Youth.

The most of us will not rest content with the performance of our duties toward ourselves and toward our fellowmen. We feel that if there is such a thing as duty at all it extends further than this. The satisfying of our selfish and social instincts leaves one instinct yet unsatisfied, — the religious. We recognize on the one hand the limitation of our powers and the finiteness of our intellect, and on the other hand the inscrutable mystery of things. We know the hopelessness of knowing everything; know that the farther we extend our research the more thickly do the mysteries crowd upon us and the deeper do they grow, that each discovery instead of narrowing the realm of the unknown is but a further revelation of its vastness; and we bow before an Intelligence that so infinitely transcends our own. We realize that we are but insignificant parts of the great Whole, and this brings with it a realization of a duty not only to ourselves and others like us, but also to the bird in the tree, the flower in the field, the shell on the shore, and to the Power that works in and through them all.

This duty takes many forms, — non-interference, kindness, service, submission, love, reverence, praise. Why do we pity the caged bird, and step aside to let the flower grow unharmed, and treasure and study the curious shell? Why do we stand in silent awe or burst into spontaneous tributes of admiration before the terrors and glories of the natural world? It is the gratification of a religious instinct, the performance of a religious duty.

An appeal to this duty is the loftiest appeal that can be made to man, since it is farthest removed from any

possible charge of sordid selfishness. Therefore to comport with this character, the language and style of composition should be reverent, dignified, lofty, and thoroughly sincere. The following, taken from an argument by Herbert Spencer on the relative value of various kinds of knowledge, is practically a plea for the study of science addressed to all whose sense of religious duty has a controlling influence over their action.

Lastly we have to assert — and the assertion will, we doubt not, cause extreme surprise — that the discipline of science is superior to that of our ordinary education, because of the *religious* culture that it gives. Of course we do not here use the words scientific and religious in their ordinary limited acceptations; but in their widest and highest acceptations. Doubtless, to the superstitions that pass under the name of religion, science is antagonistic; but not to the essential religion which these superstitions merely hide. Doubtless, too, in much of the science that is current, there is a pervading spirit of irreligion; but not in that true science which has passed beyond the superficial into the profound.

So far from science being irreligious, as many think, it is the neglect of science that is irreligious — it is the refusal to study the surrounding creation that is irreligious. Take a humble simile. Suppose a writer were daily saluted with praises couched in superlative language. Suppose the wisdom, the grandeur, the beauty of his works, were the constant topics of the eulogies addressed to him. Suppose those who unceasingly uttered these eulogies on his works were content with looking at the outsides of them; and had never opened them, much less tried to understand them. What value should we put upon their praises? What should we think of their sincerity? Yet, comparing small things to great, such is the conduct of mankind in general, in reference to the Universe and its Cause. Nay, it is worse. Not only do they pass by without study, these things which they daily proclaim to be so wonderful; but very frequently they condemn as mere

triflers those who give time to the observation of Nature—they actually scorn those who show any active interest in these marvels. We repeat, then, that not science, but the neglect of science, is irreligious. Devotion to science is a tacit worship—a tacit recognition of worth in the things studied; and by implication in their Cause. It is not a mere lip-homage, but a homage expressed in actions—not a mere professed respect, but a respect proved by the sacrifice of time, thought, and labor.

Nor is it thus only that true science is essentially religious. It is religious, too, inasmuch as it generates a profound respect for, and an implicit faith in, those uniform laws which underlie all things. By accumulated experiences the man of science acquires a thorough belief in the unchanging relations of phenomena—in the invariable connection of cause and consequence—in the necessity of good or evil results. Instead of the rewards and punishments of traditional belief, which men vaguely hope they may gain, or escape, spite of their disobedience; he finds that there are rewards and punishments in the ordained constitution of things, and that the evil results of disobedience are inevitable. He sees that the laws to which we must submit are not only inexorable but beneficent. He sees that in virtue of these laws, the process of things is ever toward a greater perfection and a higher happiness. Hence he is led constantly to insist on these laws, and is indignant when men disregard them. And thus does he, by asserting the eternal principles of things and the necessity of conforming to them, prove himself intrinsically religious.

To all which, add the further religious aspect of science, that it alone can give us true conceptions of ourselves and our relation to the mysteries of existence. At the same time that it shows us all which can be known, it shows us the limits beyond which we can know nothing. Not by dogmatic assertion does it teach the impossibility of comprehending the ultimate cause of things; but it leads us clearly to recognize this impossibility by bringing us in every direction to boundaries we cannot cross. It realizes to us in a way which nothing else can, the littleness of human intelligence in the face of that which transcends human intelligence. While towards the traditions and authorities of men its attitude may be proud, before the impenetrable veil which hides

the Absolute its attitude is humble—a true pride and a true humility. Only the sincere man of science (and by this title we do not mean the mere calculator of distances, or analyzer of compounds, or labeller of species; but him who through lower truths seeks higher, and eventually the highest)—only the genuine man of science, we say, can truly know how utterly beyond, not only human knowledge, but human conception, is the Universal Power of which Nature, and Life, and Thought are manifestations.

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## EXERCISE LX.

## ORATORY.—OCCASIONAL FORMS.

*Subjects:*

- Speech in Commemoration of Washington's Birthday.  
Longfellow's Birthday.  
Declaration of Independence.
- Address for Arbor Day.  
Memorial Day.  
Commencement.  
Thanksgiving.
- On the Unveiling of a Monument to General Grant.  
Dedication of the Public Library.  
President's Inaugural Address.  
Speech in Response to the Toast, "Our Guest."  
"The Prize-winners."  
"Once Upon a Time."  
"Our Future."
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While Exposition, Argumentation, and Persuasion are clearly distinct, it is just as impossible to keep them always separate as it is to keep Narration and Description separate. All three are often employed in the same discourse and there is no reason why they should

not be. Still for convenience we may wish to distinguish the discourse as belonging to one class or the other, and then we shall have to be guided by what seems to be its principal object, whether it is intended to inform, to correct, or to arouse, whether it aims to explain a fact, to prove a statement, or to influence an action. We have seen that an argument may be most effective sometimes if made up almost wholly of exposition. In like manner the ends of persuasion may often be effected by simple exposition or argument, or by a combination of the two. The citation from Herbert Spencer in the last exercise contained scarcely a directly persuasive word and yet it was offered as an example of persuasive discourse because its object so manifestly is to move people to lay more stress on scientific studies in ordinary education.

The precise method adopted in any case will depend on many considerations, — on the general character of the persons appealed to, on their present attitude and feeling, on the kind of action desired, whether calm or violent, immediate or remote, etc. Thus far we have treated of persuasive discourse that is written and intended to be read. In such the calmer expository and argumentative methods are very appropriate. When we come, as we now do, to the more ordinary form under which this style of discourse is found, declamation, oratory, these methods will naturally fall into the background in order to give more prominence to direct address and stirring appeals.

It has been said that oratory is on the decline, that we have no more Ciceros, Pitts, Burkes, Websters, Beechers. Perhaps this is true in a certain degree. It

may well be that the extension of printing, making it possible to appeal at once to a vast audience in nearly every part of the world, has dwarfed the importance of oratory. Why should people crowd the galleries of our congressional halls when they can read the speeches over their coffee the next morning? Or why should a speaker address a hundred people here and another hundred there, when he can with so little trouble put his speech in print and address thousands?

But of course the peculiar charm and value of oratory are not dead. People will still be made to listen who could never be made to read, and people hearing will be aroused who reading would sit unmoved. And men speaking will still find their tongues tipped with a fire which would never irradiate the point of their pens.

Nor is the need for oratory past. A felicitous response to a toast will give a life, a character, and a unity to a dinner-party that nothing else can give. In no more fitting way than by a fervent speech can we dedicate buildings and consecrate enterprises. Inaugural addresses, baccalaureate addresses, Labor-day speeches, memorial sermons, Fourth of July orations, — all of these occasional forms of oratory we still demand, to say nothing of the forms regularly practiced in politics, the law, the ministry, etc. It will be noticed that into some of these forms the element of persuasion scarcely enters at all, but since they come under the general head of oratory it seems best to include them here.

The following plain but graceful speech was delivered at a public dinner in Philadelphia in 1846 by the Hon. Samuel Breck, who presided. The address is compli-

mentary to Daniel Webster, in whose honor the dinner was given : —

GENTLEMEN : — I rise to propose a toast, expressive of the great esteem and honor in which we hold the illustrious guest whom we are assembled to welcome. It is cause for felicitation to have this opportunity to receive him, and to meet him at our festive board.

In Philadelphia we have long been accustomed to follow him, with earnest attention, in his high vocations in the legislative hall and in the Cabinet ; and have always seen him there exercising his great talents for the true interests of our wide-spread Republic. And we, in common with the American people, have felt the influence of his wisdom and patriotism. In seasons of danger, he has been to us a living comforter ; and more than once has restored this nation to serenity, security, and prosperity.

In a career of more than thirty years of political agitation, he, with courageous constancy, unwavering integrity, and eminent ability, has carried out, as far as his agency could prevail, the true principles of the American system of government.

For his numerous public services we owe him much, and we open our grateful hearts to him in thanks ; we say to him, with feelings of profound respect and warm affection, that we are rejoiced at his presence here, amid his Philadelphia friends — his faithful Philadelphia friends and admirers.

Thirteen years later, and seven years after the death of Daniel Webster, the seventy-seventh anniversary of the great statesman's birthday was commemorated by a banquet at which the orator, Rufus Choate, made an address. The opening words of that address were as follow : —

I would not have it supposed for a moment that I design to make any eulogy, or any speech, concerning the great man whose birthday we have met to observe. I hasten to assure you that I shall attempt to do no such thing. There is no longer need of it, or fitness for it, for any purpose. Times have been when such a thing might have been done with propriety. While he was yet



personally among us, while he was yet walking in his strength in the paths or ascending the heights of active public life, or standing upon them, — and so many of the good and wise, so many of the wisest and best of our country, from all parts of it, thought he had title to the great office of our system, and would have had him formally presented for it, — it was fit that those who loved and honored him should publicly — with effort, with passion, with argument, with contention — recall the series of his services, his life of elevated labors, finished and unfinished, display his large qualities of character and mind, and compare him, somewhat, in all these things, with the great men, his competitors for the great prize. Then was there a battle to be fought, and it was needful to fight it.

And so, again, in a later day, while our hearts were yet bleeding with the sense of recent loss, and he lay newly dead in his chamber, and the bells were tolling, and his grave was open, and the sunlight of an autumn day was falling on that long funeral train, I do not say it was fit only, it was unavoidable, that we all, in some choked utterance and some imperfect, sincere expression, should, if we could not praise the patriot, lament the man.

But these times have gone by. The race of honor and duty is for him all run. The high endeavor is made, and it is finished. The monument is builded. He is entered into his glory. The day of hope, of pride, of grief, has been followed by the long rest; and the sentiments of grief, pride, and hope, are all merged in the sentiment of calm and implicit veneration. We have buried him in our hearts. That is enough to say. Our estimation of him is part of our creed. We have no argument to make or hear upon it. We enter into no dispute about him. We permit no longer any man to question us as to what he was, what he had done, how much we loved him, how much the country loved him, and how well he deserved it. We admire, we love, and we are still. Be this enough for us to say.

Is it not enough that we just stand silent on the deck of the bark fast flying from the shore, and turn and see, as the line of coast disappears, and the headlands and hills and all the land go down, and the islands are swallowed up, the great mountain standing there in its strength and majesty, supreme and still — to

see how it swells away up from the subject and fading vale? to see that, though clouds and tempests, and the noise of waves, and the yelping of curs, may be at its feet, eternal sunshine has settled upon its head?

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## EXERCISE LXI.

### ORATORY.—THE STUMP.\*

#### *Subjects :*

The Need of Civil Service Reform.	Down with Monopolies.
Irish Home Rule.	Dignity of Labor.
Freedom of the Press.	Political Rings and Bosses.
Purification of the Ballot.	Female Suffrage.
State Rights and Individual Rights.	Municipal Misrule.
Uphold the Constitution.	

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In this country every Presidential campaign and indeed every local election involving important issues gives occasion to the politician to endeavor by public speeches to influence votes and increase his constituency or that of his favorite candidate. Owing to an early-day frontier practice of speaking from the stumps of trees, such speakers are still commonly said to "take the stump." In England and Ireland they "mount the hustings."

Doubtless this method of electioneering is much abused; but we may not decri it on that account. The addresses are made directly to the voters and often to a class of voters who do not read much and who need enlightenment on the issues of the day. The difficulty lies in the fact that nearly all of these great questions have two sides, each with its sincere advocates,

and a speaker is apt to be misled by his enthusiasm to make out a good case and unduly influence votes by representing his side in a too favorable light. But nevertheless we indulge such championship even to the extent of partisanship, feeling that full discussion is better than none at all and trusting that in the long run "ever the right comes uppermost, and ever is justice done."

With purely extemporaneous speaking we have nothing to do except in so far as the practice of writing speeches may assist in the development of an oratorical style. For speeches—even after-dinner speeches, even stump speeches—are written or prepared beforehand, the great majority of them. A really good extemporaneous speech is rare, for it requires the happy combination of a rare man and a rare occasion. Given this combination, you have an ideal address.

Right here we get a clue to the secret of writing a successful oration: we must make it conform as nearly as possible to our ideal of an extemporaneous one. That there should be certain differences between written discourse and spoken discourse, that is, between that which is intended to be read and that which is intended to be heard, few will deny. In delivering an address you will have to face an audience, look people in the eye, hold their attention, play on their feelings, endure their displeasure or receive their applause. In preparing the address beforehand all this should be borne in mind. Imagine as vividly as you can that you have your audience before you; do not lose sight of it for a moment; write to it as you will have to talk to it; use terms of direct address—gentlemen, friends, fellow-citizens—wherever they seem natural and not over-

formal ; be genial, frank, gracious yet earnest, familiar yet dignified. The advantages of personal directness of address, of getting so close to your audience that they will almost feel as if you held them by the hand, cannot be over-estimated. One of the most telling stump-speeches the present writer ever heard was addressed almost throughout to a particular person in the audience who was a good type of the class whom the speaker wished to reach. He proceeded in about this style:

You know how it is, sir—you, sir, sitting there in the fourth row of seats on the right of the aisle. You will remember that just four years ago this fall I was driving through the country here and staid over night with you. You remember how you were disposed to complain then because you had not realized enough on your abundant wheat harvest to pay for the machinery you had bought that year and because you couldn't see how the corn-crop was going to clothe your family through the winter. I asked you how you were voting and you said that had nothing to do with the matter. And then I said that if you thought that had nothing to do with the matter you surely could not see any harm in making the experiment of voting the other way and of getting a hundred other farmers to make the experiment with you. Did you make the experiment? I am afraid not. Certain it is that the hundred others did not, for when returns from the district came in you had rolled up the same old majority. And what is the result? Your receipts are just as far from covering your expenditures to-day as they were four years ago to-day. Deny it if you can.

## EXERCISE LXII.

### ORATORY.—THE BAR.

Eloquence is oratory at its best ; it is difficult to define it more accurately than that. True eloquence

does not lie in words alone ; nor in the speaker alone ; nor yet in the hearer or the occasion. Rather it seems to lie in all of these. For the same words uttered by the same man will seem sublime at one time and ridiculous at another, or will ring eloquent in the ears of one man, bombastic in the ears of another. When a man's words move and stir us to the very depths of our being, when they make us forget ourselves completely, so that we are ready to laugh and weep, even to rise and follow, at his command, we say that man is eloquent. But we do not analyze the spell he casts over us nor attempt to wrest from him the whole secret of his power.

But if we do not know just what eloquence is, we know some things that it is not. We know for one thing that it is not grandiloquence. Long, sonorous words and lofty, high-sounding phrases are no necessary part of it ; they are rather apt to be fatal to it. There may be more eloquence in one fitly spoken word, nay in silence itself, than in the most ingenious rhetoric. Read the twentieth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John and feel the effect of one word which Jesus utters : *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* And can anything be more simple and more sublime than the prayer from the same lips as the rabble reviled him gathered about the cross, *Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.*

Strained figures are as fatal to eloquence as fantastic words. It may be questioned whether a deliberate figure of speech is ever found in passages where eloquence takes its highest flight. Indeed, violence of any kind, in words as well as in utterance and gesture, is to be sedulously avoided ; ranting and spread-eagleism find favor only with the indiscriminating few. This does

not mean that there is to be no exhibition of life or energy. On the contrary, this is usually a most essential thing in oratory. The precaution refers only to that affected energy or that excess of energy which overshoots its mark.

If we may draw any principle from these observations, it would seem to be that fundamental principle of all literary effort, Be natural; be true to yourself, to your audience, and to your theme. Fine language is well enough if it flows from lips familiar with its utterance. Sentiment is well enough if it springs from the heart. Fervor and enthusiasm are all right so long as they are sincere. Indeed, it is wholly useless to attempt to feign these things. Eloquence is not like a glove, to be put on and off at pleasure. Few men can be imposed upon by a display of false sentiment. Assume an emotion you do not feel and the chances are ten to one that the deception will be detected at once and resented. Betray an emotion that the occasion does not warrant and the result will be equally disastrous.

In the particular kind of oratory had in view in the present exercise, namely, the pleading of an advocate at the bar of justice, argument will naturally constitute the staple of the material. But, as the ultimate object is not merely to demonstrate truths, but to persuade juries to act according to those truths, other than purely argumentative elements can not be excluded: the plea is bound to take on more or less of the nature of an appeal. It is difficult to suggest subjects for this work. The best method of getting material is to conduct a mock trial. Another method is to try some historical character before an imaginary tribunal for certain alleged acts of his or hers.

We give below an extract from a speech made by Daniel Webster before a jury in 1830. J. F. Knapp and J. J. Knapp were charged with the murder of Captain Joseph White. J. J. Knapp confessed that one Richard Crowninshield had been hired by them to commit the murder, whereupon Crowninshield committed suicide. The confession was then withdrawn and the Knapps were indicted, with the result that they were convicted and executed. Webster spoke for the prosecution.

Against the prisoner at the bar, as an individual, I cannot have the slightest prejudice. I would not do him the smallest injury or injustice. But I do not affect to be indifferent to the discovery and the punishment of this deep guilt. I cheerfully share in the opprobrium, how much soever it may be, which is cast on those who feel and manifest an anxious concern that all who had a part in planning or a hand in executing this deed of midnight assassination may be brought to answer for their enormous crime at the bar of public justice.

This is a most extraordinary case. In some respects it has hardly a precedent anywhere, certainly none in our New England history. This bloody drama exhibits no suddenly excited, ungovernable rage. . . .

An aged man, without an enemy in the world, in his own house, and in his own bed, is made the victim of a butcherly murder for mere pay. Truly, here is a new lesson for painters and poets. Whoever shall hereafter draw the portrait of murder, if he will show it as it has been exhibited in an example, where such example was last to have been looked for, in the very bosom of our New England society, let him not give it the grim visage of Moloch, the brow knitted by revenge, the face black with settled hate, and the blood-shot eye emitting livid fires of malice. Let him draw, rather, a decorous, smooth-faced, bloodless demon; a picture in repose, rather than in action; not so much an example of human nature in its depravity, and in its paroxysms of crime,

as an infernal nature, a fiend in the ordinary display and development of his character.

The deed was executed with a degree of self-possession and steadiness equal to the wickedness with which it was planned. The circumstances, now clearly in evidence, spread out the whole scene before us. Deep sleep had fallen on the destined victim, and on all beneath his roof. A healthful old man, to whom sleep was sweet, the first sound slumbers of the night held him in their soft but strong embrace. The assassin enters through the window, already prepared, into an unoccupied apartment. With noiseless foot he paces the lonely hall, half-lighted by the moon; he winds up the ascent of the stairs, and reaches the door of the chamber. Of this, he moves the lock by soft and continued pressure till it turns on its hinges without noise; and he enters, and beholds his victim before him. The room was uncommonly open to the admission of light. The face of the innocent sleeper was turned from the murderer, and the beams of the moon, resting on the gray locks of his aged temple, showed him where to strike. The fatal blow is given! and the victim passes, without a struggle or a motion, from the repose of sleep to the repose of death! . . .

Meantime the guilty soul cannot keep its own secret. It is false to itself, or rather it feels an irresistible impulse of conscience to be true to itself. It labors under its guilty possession and knows not what to do with it. The human heart was not made for the residence of such an inhabitant. It finds itself preyed on by a torment, which it dares not acknowledge to God or man. A vulture is devouring it, and it can ask no sympathy or assistance either from heaven or earth. The secret which the murderer possesses soon comes to possess him; and, like the evil spirits of which we read, it overcomes him, and leads him whithersoever it will. He feels it beating at his heart, rising to his throat, and demanding disclosure. He thinks the whole world sees it in his face, reads it in his eyes, and almost hears its workings in the very silence of his thoughts. It has become his master. It betrays his discretion, it breaks down his courage, it conquers his prudence. When suspicions from without begin to embarrass him, and the net of circumstance to entangle him, the fatal secret struggles with still greater violence to burst forth. It must be



confessed, it will be confessed : there is no refuge from confession but suicide, and suicide is confession.

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## EXERCISE LXIII.

### ORATORY.—THE LEGISLATURE.

*Subjects :*

Plea for International Copyright.	Needed Postal Legislation.
Restriction of Foreign Immigration.	Shall the State License Lot-
Distribution of Public Lands.	teries ?

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Spoken discourse ranges from the plainest talk to the most elaborate address. At the one extreme will be found the easy, familiar, colloquial style of conversation ; at the other the lofty diction that accompanies formal, dignified oratory. But there are certain characteristics that run through all varieties and grades and serve to distinguish them from written discourse. From a mere grammatical and rhetorical standpoint greater looseness of structure is admissible and greater license generally. Occasionally constructions which would not pass in writing may be ventured upon here because the intonation of the voice and the whole manner of the speaker can redeem them from any possible charge of obscurity, weakness, or inelegance. Just as our everyday conversation is full of broken and unfinished sentences, so we may expect to find them in a speech where the speaker is supposed to adopt the suggestions of the occasion and to follow the impulses of his own emotions. Short sentences are to be chosen

rather than long, and all long ones should be simple and straightforward in construction. This is for clearness' sake, for a speaker can take no chances on that score. A reader can go back and read a sentence a second or third time if he does not understand it the first, but an auditor must understand it at once or not at all. For the same reason frequent repetition, which is objectionable in a book, is tolerable and even desirable in a speech. By this is meant a repetition of thought in a new form, though at times the repetition may extend to the words themselves and still be effective. And above all this we shall expect in spoken discourse a greater warmth of utterance, a freer display of emotion, and a fuller infusion of the speaker's personality.

In the last exercise we dealt with oratory as an instrument for protecting society by persuading men to fulfill the intent of the law. In the present exercise we deal with oratory of a broader scope — that which has for its aim the persuading of a recognized body of legislators to make, amend, modify, or repeal the laws by which civil institutions must stand or fall. This means in our country the oratory of the Senate and House of Representatives, of the State Assemblies and Legislatures, and various local Councils and Boards. There are numberless questions continually pressing upon the states and the nation that will afford a rich variety of material for orations. Nearly every city, village, and school-district, too, has under deliberation questions that are just as vital to its prosperity as these larger, national ones — questions of sewerage systems, railway franchises, street-paving contracts, improvement of highways, etc., etc. Or, if you are drawing up a

constitution for a debating society, or believe that the rules of any organization with which you are connected need modification or amendment, write a speech urging the measures you would like to have adopted. The language in all of these cases will be largely argumentative, of course, and the appeal will be to both personal and social duty.

The following sentence from an editorial in the *Christian Union* will suggest one way of handling the third subject in the list given above :

A clever Frenchman once said that the old aristocrats distributed public wealth upon the principle, "To each according to his breed"; the plutocrats on the principle, "To each according to his greed"; the communists on the principle, "To each according to his need"; the socialists on the principle, "To each according to his deed." In Oklahoma the principle is, "To each according to his speed," and it is certainly the most irrational of all.

The following outline of the second subject is offered as a model :

#### FOREIGN IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE CHECKED.

- I. Introduction.
  - a. When immigration is beneficial.
  - b. When should it be checked in the United States?
- II. Immigrants in general.
  - a. Past conditions under which they began life in our country.
  - b. Present conditions under which they begin life here.
  - c. Their disappointment and its effect.
- III. Paupers.
  - a. Their character and condition.
  - b. Their effect upon our laboring class.
  - c. Concrete examples from Pennsylvania, Ohio, New England, and Michigan.

## IV. Anarchists.

- a.* Their ideas of government and religion.
- b.* Their power.
- c.* Their ignorance, and stand regarding education.
- d.* Their moral condition.
- e.* Why especially dangerous in the United States.

## V. Chinese.

- a.* Differ from Americans in race, religion, and civilization.
- b.* Object in coming to America.
- c.* Results :
  1. They carry away our gold.
  2. Lower standards of life.
  3. Hinder the development of the country.
  4. Help monopolies.
  5. Corrupt the youth.

## VI. Immigrants in general.

- a.* Their great numbers.
- b.* Tendency to colonize.
- c.* Impossibility of Americanizing such vast numbers.
- d.* Influence of clergy over certain classes.
- e.* Their opposition to public schools.
- f.* Their alarmingly bad moral influence in our cities.

## VII. Conclusion.

- a.* Immigration should be checked in the United States because the conditions for such a course are now realized.
- b.* Self-preservation the first law of nature.
- c.* How to protect our nation and secure its permanency.

The following paragraphs are from a speech before the House of Representatives by the Hon. R. R. Hitt, on the bill to amend certain sections of the Revised Statutes relating to lotteries :

MR. SPEAKER: The lottery is the most pernicious and widespread form of gambling vice, because it uses for its instrument the Post-Office Department; that is, the Government. The

ordinary gambling-hell is confined to one house and its frequenters. A lottery spreads through the whole nation; it reaches everywhere, and it does it by the aid of the Government. It was not for this that we built up our magnificent postal system, which is supported at such vast expense annually. Yet that postal system is the instrument to-day and might almost be called the partner or accessory of this great swindling scheme. . . .

Without the aid of the Government through the Post-Office Department, the whole business would be cut down to a mere local gambling establishment answerable to the police powers of the local government. That is what I trust this bill will do. It broadens the present law so that a lottery letter can be followed after it is mailed at New Orleans or Washington, which are the centers of the lottery business, and the offenders punished wherever the letter goes,—not alone in Louisiana, where juries can be readily affected by the tremendous power of the lottery company.

It will close the mails to newspapers advertising lotteries, which will be a long step toward destroying their means of reaching and deluding the victim by alluring advertisements and promises which appeal to the cupidity of the ignorant and unthinking who hasten to be rich without labor. Nor does it in the least interfere with the inviolability of the seal upon letters, which will be as sacred hereafter as they have been and always should be. It authorizes the Postmaster-General, upon satisfactory evidence, which will soon be obtained by the agents of the Department, in regard to the character of lottery letters, to stop their transmission through the mails and institute proceedings to punish those sending. We know that the Postmaster-General will faithfully and zealously perform his part if we do ours and pass this bill. Let us do it, and do it now.

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## EXERCISE LXIV.

### ORATORY.—THE PULPIT.

#### *Subjects :*

It is More Blessed to Give than to Receive.	Christian Conduct.
The Duty of Self-Abnegation.	Man shall Not Live by Bread Alone.

The orator's success depends in no small degree upon his skill in adapting his style to his audience. A stump speaker in the backwoods will naturally adopt a very different tone from that of a legislator on the floor of Congress, even though he may be speaking on the same subject. An ignorant demagogue will hardly succeed in moving a cultivated audience, while, on the other hand, an address that is "over the heads" of the hearers is equally futile. Either extreme is to be avoided—that of descending below or of rising too far above the intellectual level of those addressed. It may be occasionally that an orator's end is best subserved by assuming to place his auditors on a higher plane, thus flattering their self-esteem. But if they are allowed to suspect that this is done purposely they will naturally feel insulted and withhold their sympathy. Again, it may seem best to endeavor to strike their own level, to talk to them just as they might be expected to talk themselves. The danger here is that they may realize they are being "talked down to" and feel that their intelligence is being underrated. The story is told of Patrick Henry that in certain of his speeches in Virginia he went so far as to imitate the very dialect of the backwoodsmen. But the effect was not what he calculated upon. His hearers knew that this was only an imitation and therefore an artifice. They would have listened more respectfully and more willingly had he kept to his natural style.

Taking all these things into consideration it would seem that in general the best tone to adopt is one somewhat above the level of the audience, provided, of course, that this is natural to the speaker and not beyond

his own powers. An audience naturally assumes that a speaker has more knowledge or power than they of the kind he purposes to exhibit or they would not come to hear him. And even if he does go beyond their intelligence now and then they will hardly resent it, for it is rather gratifying than otherwise to the average man to have it assumed that he knows somewhat more than he actually does. Only, the speaker must guard against excursions and flights in which his audience will wholly fail to follow him. The intricacies of politics and theology, the technicalities of science, and the abstractions of philosophy, would clearly be out of place before a mixed assemblage.

This may be said further: In general, the higher the intelligence of the auditors the more averse will they be to rant and bombast, the more quickly will they resent any attempt to influence their judgment by emotional appeals, the more will they care for simple facts and dispassionate reason. Not that they are necessarily less emotional, or take less pleasure in giving play to their emotional natures, only they realize that action should be governed by wisdom and judgment rather than by mere impulse. If they wish to satisfy the cravings of this emotional nature they know they have other resources, the drama, for instance, and poetry, where there is little or no persuasion to positive and immediate action.

Pulpit oratory is peculiarly apt to be of the emotional type. If religion is a matter of sentiment, of the feelings purely, there certainly can be no objection to this. But people are beginning to demand a reason for everything they do, and to suspect any religious movement,

as they would suspect any political movement, which does not invite full intellectual investigation ; and so simple exhortation in the pulpit is more and more giving place to exposition and argument.

A good example of the first kind of preaching may be found in the second chapter of George Eliot's *Adam Bede*. The following example of pulpit oratory is taken from the opening and close of a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Talmage :

. . . There are ten thousand ways of telling a lie. A man's entire life may be a falsehood, while with his lips he may not once directly falsify. There are those who state what is positively untrue, but afterward say " may be " softly. These departures from the truth are called white lies, but there is really no such thing as a white lie. The whitest lie that was ever told was as black as perdition. There are men high in church and state, actually useful, self-denying, and honest in many things, who, upon certain subjects and in certain spheres, are not at all to be depended upon for veracity. Indeed, there are multitudes of men who have their notion of truthfulness so thoroughly perverted that they do not know when they are lying. With many it is a cultivated sin ; with some it seems a natural infirmity. I have known people who seemed to have been born liars. The falsehoods of their lives extended from cradle to grave. Prevarication, misrepresentation, and dishonesty of speech, appeared in their first utterances and were as natural to them as any of their infantile diseases, and were a sort of moral croup or spiritual scarlatina. But many have been placed in circumstances where this tendency has day by day and hour by hour been called to larger development. They have gone from attainment to attainment, and from class to class, until they have become regularly graduated liars.

The air of the city is filled with falsehoods. They hang pendent from the chandeliers of our finest residences. They crowd the shelves of some of our merchant princes. They fill the sidewalk from curb-stone to brown-stone facing. They cluster



round the mechanic's hammer, and blossom from the end of the merchant's yardstick, and sit in the doors of churches. Some call them "fiction." Some style them "fabrications." You might say that they were subterfuge, disguise, illusion, romance, evasion, pretence, fable, deception, misrepresentation; but, as I am ignorant of anything to be gained by the hiding of a God-defying outrage under a lexicographer's blanket, I shall chiefly call them in plainest vernacular — lies. . . .

Let us all strive to be what we appear to be, and banish from our lives everything that looks like deception, remembering that God will yet reveal to the universe what we really are.

To many, alas, this life is a masquerade ball. As at such entertainments gentlemen and ladies appear in the dress of kings and queens, mountain bandits or clowns, and at the close of the dance throw off their disguises, so many all through life move in mask. Across the floor they trip merrily. The lights sparkle along the wall or drop from the ceiling, a very cohort of fire. The feet bound, gemmed hands stretched out clasp gemmed hands, dancing feet respond to dancing feet, gleaming brow bends low to gleaming brow. On with the dance! Flash and rustle and laughter and immeasurable merrymaking! But the languor of death comes over the limbs and blurs the sight. Lights lower; floors hollow with sepulchral echo; music saddens into a wail. Lights lower; the maskers can hardly now be seen; flowers exchange their fragrance for a sickening odor, such as comes from garlands that have lain in vaults of cemeteries. Lights lower; mists fill the room; glasses rattle as though shaken by sullen thunder; sighs seem caught among the curtains; scarf falls from the shoulder of beauty—a shroud. Lights lower; over the slippery boards in dance of death glide jealousies, disappointments, lust, despair; torn leaves and withered garlands only half hide the ulcered feet; the stench of the smoking lamp-wicks almost quenched, choking damps, chilliness, feet still, hands folded, eyes shut, voices hushed. Lights out!

## EXERCISE LXV.

## ORATORY.—THE PLATFORM.

*Subjects :*

The Greatest Need of the Age.	“Sweetness and Light.”
The Passion Play at Oberammergau.	The Stability of American
Stories of the Stars.	Institutions.
The Faculty of Appreciation.	The Coming Race.
The Puritans.	

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On the public lecture platform oratory finds perhaps its broadest scope. Here subjects are drawn from every possible field, appeals are made to every conceivable motive, and the style ranges from the humorous to the pathetic and the sublime. Here then the orator has full play of his powers and may be expected to use every resource at his command.

The object of a public lecture is not in general to arouse people to any particular or hasty action ; oftener this would seem to be very far from its purpose. And no doubt the people are inclined to look upon it solely as a means for their instruction or entertainment. But it is more than that. The lecture platform is a means for bringing the great leaders of the world's thought and action into closer touch with the masses whom they lead. The true public orator realizes this. He knows that while he may instruct and amuse he does it to better purpose than that. He knows that his responsibility is great because his opportunity is great and his influence incalculable. He knows that the fitly and fervently spoken word shall fall as a seed into the

hearts of his hearers to germinate in due season and blossom into lovely or unlovely characters and bear fruit in deeds that shall be a curse or a blessing to all humanity. With this realization full upon him he may well feel that there is no dignity or sincerity or wisdom or strength that he should not strive to attain.



PART III.

Miscellaneous Forms.



## Introductory: Scope and Complete Method of Composition.



In the foregoing Parts, following the commonly accepted division of the subject of Composition, we have made a survey of the whole field, so far as seemed practicable. It has frequently been seen how the several divisions overlap and intermingle, making anything like a sharply defined and therefore exhaustive division impossible. It will be seen further that prominence of any element or attribute not made the basis of our division—peculiar qualities of style, specific practical or literary purposes, etc.,—gives rise to forms not sufficiently provided for in our method. They could be fitted into our scheme of classification doubtless, but the process would involve embarrassing distortion. All the old principles must hold good, too, but there will have to be modifications and adaptations to accord with the peculiar form or specific purpose.

Because of this a few exercises are added here dealing with the more prominent forms of composition that thus arise. The list cannot be complete, and may not be very helpful, but it will at least serve to show how varied and interesting, practice in writing can be made. Special subjects are not given, but the student will readily find or make them. A character self-developed and self-portrayed by speech or action; a dialect sketch, Yankee, Hoosier, Creole, Negro, Chinese; a critical review of a favorite book, of the last lecture, opera, play; a fashion note, a bit of gossip; a story from

country, village, or city life; a romance, a ghost story; a reminiscence, a dream, a meditation;—the variety of themes is endless.

One thing will bear emphasis here. It has already been dwelt upon in Exercises IV. and XXVIII.—XXX. It is the art of selection. It rests simply upon the fact that nothing is equally important at all times, nor all things at the same time. True generally, this is particularly true in letters. The mere fact that a thing exists is not sufficient excuse for thrusting it upon our attention. We hold some things of more account than others and cannot afford to spend time over those that neither harm nor help nor interest us. And truth itself may often do none of these. Besides we have a higher conception of the province of art than the mere reproduction of things as they are without even a change of combination. Actual facts, truth—science is concerned with that. But there is another kind of truth, with which art is concerned—truth to what might be, ought to be, ought not to be. Fidelity, not only to what is, but to what is probable or possible—grant this to be within the scope of art and you have a conception worthy of a creative mind. The art of selection therefore means much. It looks forward to combination, construction—such creation as we are capable of. It means that this feature must be taken intact, that feature must be modified, the other must be rejected. It means that each part must be good and appropriate and that all parts must fit together so that the whole shall be good. For practical suggestions relative to this process the student is referred to the Exercises cited above. More can be



learned in the attempt to apply the principles and in the study of successful work. And the mere keeping in mind the necessity of cultivating this art of selection and rejection will help toward its better attainment.

If now we take Mr. Ruskin's canon — "Remember always, you have two characters in which all greatness of art consists : — First, the earnest and intense seizing of natural facts ; then the ordering those facts by strength of human intellect, so as to make them, for all who look upon them, to the utmost serviceable, memorable, and beautiful" — if we take this and consider it as applicable to the art of composition, it will be seen that we have supplemented it with two other "characters" possibly comprehended by Mr. Ruskin in the above — selection and expression. After the "seizing of natural facts," which was the burden of the first part of our work, comes the discrimination among them and selection, spoken of there and repeated with emphasis here. Then follows the ordering of those facts — arrangement — so eloquently insisted upon by Mr. Ruskin. Lastly comes adequate expression, which together with arrangement has been specially discussed in the introduction to Part II. Such is the complete method of composition ; follow it in every endeavor, no matter how imperfectly, through the several stages, and the result cannot be wholly bad.

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## EXERCISE LXVI.

### NEWS.

Of the many departments of journalism, we shall consider two or three only, which especially demand the

exercise of the pen. One of these is the preparation of news for the daily and weekly press. News-gathering and reporting constitute a profession in themselves and cannot be treated of at any length here. A few hints, however, cannot come amiss. For there is at least one kind of news-reporting common in this country which must be undertaken by non-professionals. This is the news-letter which is sent at regular intervals to a city or county paper by correspondents in adjacent towns or country districts too thinly populated to support local papers of their own. Virtually the same principles hold good here as in the higher forms of journalistic work ; and the lack of a knowledge of them is painfully evident in almost all the country newspapers in the land.

In the first place, what is legitimate news? All happenings, we say, of general interest and presumably not yet generally known, which it will do no harm, or at any rate, more good than harm, to communicate to the public. It is at once manifest that occurrences which are of interest only to those who are actual witnesses of them or participants in them, cannot properly be designated news. On the other hand, when we say that they should be of general interest, we do not mean by that, universal interest. Such interest will attach to very few events, indeed. But the importance of the news will be measured by the degree and extent of the interest which it excites, and the news-gatherer, remembering this fact, and taking account of his public, will be able to discriminate accordingly. It should be considered, too, that a piece of news may bear a very different importance, according as the public interest is

absorbed or not by events of greater moment. Does any one want to know that a certain citizen of an Alpine town has suddenly fallen ill, when the whole town is threatened by an avalanche? In public crises, at times of local or national elections, celebrations, calamities, newspapers are fully warranted in rejecting items of news that at other times would be freely admitted.

Let everything of the nature of gossip be sedulously avoided. Do not descend to small talk, idle tales, vague rumors, innuendoes, matters that appeal to an unworthy curiosity rather than to a healthy interest. Let purely private affairs remain private. It may be that people are no more prone to-day than they ever were to pry into their neighbors' secrets — it is extremely probable that they are even less so — but the increased facilities for the dissemination of news have undoubtedly contributed much to the violation of the sanctity of private life. It is safest and best to become no party to such violation.

Remember, too, the incalculable power of the press for good as well as for evil. Search for that which is beneficial and ennobling as studiously as you avoid that which is injurious and degrading. Seek to stimulate general interest in measures that are for the general good. You must deal with comparatively trivial matters it may be, but none the less form a higher conception of the office of newsmonger than the mere name implies. Parties and visits, accidents, crimes, sickness, births, marriages, and deaths, need not form the staple of news. The good or bad condition of the roads, the cleanliness of back dooryards or the tidiness of front

ones, the activity of trade, the organization of clubs, the progress of reforms,—in short, all matters affecting the health or prosperity of the community should not go unnoticed. It is surely as well worth reporting that Mr. Brown has imported a fine painting or a rare book from London as that Mr. Green has driven all his hogs to market. Not that the latter may not be worth reporting, only do not let it crowd out the former.

After due discrimination is made in regard to the nature of the items reported, there remains the question of how much or how little is to be included in each item. Of course all the brevity and condensation possible are demanded here. But there must be completeness too. Consider what questions would naturally arise in your own mind on first hearing of the occurrence to be reported. Has there been a fire? Then where was it? When was it? How did it originate? How was it discovered? What measures were taken to extinguish it? What were the nature and extent of the damage? Will it be repaired? On whom falls the loss? What is the amount of insurance? Many a piece of news is unsatisfactory because it fails to answer these questions. And many a piece is unsatisfactory too because it makes unexplained allusions or takes for granted a knowledge of certain events which many readers cannot possibly have. The following item from a current newspaper seems to sin in this last regard :

NEW YORK, November 10.

H. Mateland Jersey, the American representative of Lord Dunraven, received a cablegram to-day saying that Dunraven's challenge for the America cup in 1893 is coming through the mails by the steamer Germanic, which is due here a week from to-morrow.

Of course the news in a great daily newspaper must be in many respects like the consecutive chapters of a serial story, and those who are not constant readers cannot expect to understand all that is printed. But it is nevertheless the duty of news-writers to make every separate article as self-explanatory and intelligible as possible.

News-letters and news "specials" should of course be purely objective in character. They offer no occasion for the obtrusion of personal opinions; there are other departments of a newspaper through which these may find expression. Stick to facts: the temptation to depart from them is strongly felt and not always resisted by one who is constantly pandering to people's desire for the novel and curious. But the truth, more often than is suspected, is both new and strange. And the truth is ever best. Even the whole truth may not always be written and published either with safety to the writer or with benefit to the public. That you know a man to be a coward does not make it incumbent upon you to proclaim him one from the housetops. Give facts, so many and such facts as are well to give, and give them without comment. Even praise for the public spirit of a citizen or for any virtuous act is more delicate and acceptable if left to be gathered from the straightforward account of deeds and not added explicitly and bluntly at the end of the account. Shun such old formulas as, "Our best wishes for success go with him," and, "We take pleasure in noting his commendable zeal."

Lastly, give some heed to the composition, the style. News is necessarily the most hastily written of all matter intended for print. But clearness and simplic-

ity are the great essentials and these ought to attend rapid writing more naturally than their opposites. There is no time to think so long that both thought and expression become involved, and there is no need to search for ornament. Vivacity of tone, whenever it can be imparted, will contribute much toward giving any article the character known as "newsy." News writing may not be the place for a display of personality, but some degree of it will be acceptable even here. For example, it would be a great relief to a long-suffering public to be able to read an account of a birth in which there is no mention of a "smiling" father, of a wedding in which the bride is not said to be "beautiful and accomplished," of a death without allusion to any who are "left to mourn the loss." A railroad wreck is not a "holocaust," nor a panic a "pandemonium." But it has long since been found almost useless to attempt to stem the tide of newspaper improprieties and barbarisms.

No examples of articles of news need be given here, — they can be found in papers everywhere. For practice write out an account, as if for publication, of any recent occurrence with the particulars of which you are familiar. Or make up in the form of a newsletter from "A Correspondent" a budget of news items gathered from your immediate neighborhood.

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## EXERCISE LXVII.

### EDITORIALS.

News, we have said, should generally be written without comment. The editorial columns of a paper

supplement the news columns by furnishing this comment. No fact, however isolated in appearance, stands really alone in the economy of the universe. And so every event bears a more or less intimate relation to other events, and has an influence and a significance that are not always immediately apparent. It is the editor's work to trace out this relation and to detect and explain this significance. Sometimes a moral may be pointed or a lesson needs to be drawn. One day comes the news that a man has been robbed of a large amount of money which he had hoarded in his house and the next day appears the following brief editorial :

People who, in these days of banks and safe deposit companies, keep \$35,000 in money in a bureau drawer deserve to be robbed. The New Jersey ship-owner who suffered from thieves will probably never see his money again, but it is to be hoped that his misfortune will serve as a warning to others who hoard treasure. The old-time notion that money is safest in one's personal charge is exploded, and any one who secretes coin and so makes it useless for the purposes of trade deserves to have it stolen.

Sometimes the comment takes a humorous or satirical turn and serves scarcely any other purpose than that of lending spice to the column, as in the following:

The fellow from the State of Washington who devised the ingenious corset for carrying sixty-eight valuable Swiss watches ought to have dressed before a mirror. The fact that one concealed watch made a slight protuberance under his overcoat led to his undoing. It takes a very clever smuggler to run the gauntlet of the experts in New York who have had their detective abilities sharpened by months of daily observation.

But it is in dealing with the great questions of the day, social, political, or religious, municipal, national,

or international, that the editor's ability and resources are taxed to the utmost. He must keep abreast of all the news in order that he may grasp at once the significance of any particular item of it; he must watch every cloud on the social or political horizon and calculate the electric force which charges it; he must be a student of medicine, law, theology, history, philosophy, literature, for he is a teacher of all of these in turn. Versatility of knowledge and talents is still in demand in the editor's chair, though the modern tendency toward specialization and division of labor is not unfelt even here. But how does one acquire this versatility? So far as it is an acquisition, by cultivating active habits of both body and mind; by seeking wide acquaintance with men of the world, "men of affairs"; by studying, in the spirit of the historian, the life of the times. Of course even with the widest experience the editor is not omniscient. But he knows how to avail himself of resources not guessed at by many who accept his word for infallible doctrine. Is a measure proposed in Congress which is deemed unconstitutional? He goes at once to the constitution and the expositions of it. Does a war break out unexpectedly in one of the unimportant South American republics? He turns to histories, atlases, cyclopedias, and political almanacs, and in several hours writes a column explaining the whole situation. He studies and writes for the thousands who have no time to study for themselves, and thus his position becomes one of almost incalculable power and influence.

The difficulty of the editor's task will be apparent at once to the inexperienced student who tries to perform



it. But several hints upon method have already been given. The news of a current newspaper should be carefully studied and some item selected which affords plenty of matter for comment. If the news is intimately related to past events, the history and literature of the subject should be studied thoroughly. The Statesman's Year-Book, Hazell's Annual, Political Almanacs, Congressional records, census and financial reports, etc., will often be found valuable where ordinary books of reference fail because not late enough in date. A complete file of a good newspaper is likewise almost indispensable. Then, when the material is gathered, let the comment which is intended to take the form of an editorial be condensed, vigorous, and pointed.

Following are a few titles of editorials appearing at the time of this writing: Undeveloped Wealth, The Farmer and the Consumer, Taxing Luxuries, English Agriculture, Making Plush in America, New York in Gala Dress, Cleveland's Prospects, Crespo in Caracas, An Educational Campaign, Edwin Booth, Keeping the Streets Clean, The Progress of Aluminum. Consult any of the great newspapers that are published in our larger cities for examples of editorials of this class. Subjoined is one from the New York *Evening Post*, which may be entitled

#### INTELLIGENCE OF OUR IMMIGRANTS.

Free evening schools were established in New Haven about thirty years ago, and have been maintained ever since, but for several winters past the attendance upon those conducted for English-speaking pupils has been steadily diminishing. It might be supposed that this indicated less desire to overcome the defects of early education among the immigrants, who have always com-

prised the larger part of the pupils, than was the case in the sixties; but the *Palladium*, which appears to have investigated the matter, says that the truth is that there is much less occasion for such schools now than there was a score of years ago. It says that young Irish immigrants now are usually able to read with ease and to write fairly well, and have a fair knowledge of the rudiments of arithmetic, and it seems doubtful whether it will long be necessary to maintain free evening schools for English-speaking pupils. There has been a good attendance the past winter at the evening schools maintained for Italians, Scandinavians, and Russian Jews, but the principal object of the pupils has been to learn the English language. Our Swedish and Norwegian immigrants are usually well educated when they arrive here, and the *Palladium* says that, so far as New Haven's experience goes, "the Italians are fairly well educated, and the Russians and Poles, while giving evidence of having had few or almost no advantages in this direction, show a brightness and industry which make their progress rapid." This is a very encouraging report, and deserves attention at a time when there is so much anxiety about the ignorance of our immigrants.

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## EXERCISE LXVIII.

### BOOK REVIEWS.

Criticism in general, as one form of exposition, is discussed in Exercise XLV. Book reviewing is only a department of criticism, and in scope a rather narrow one too, but an age of many books has made it so common that it seems worth while to give it special notice.

The object of a book review is found in the desire of readers who cannot haunt the book stalls to know not only what new books are published but also what are their character and comparative worth. And whatever may be the value of the judgment thus, often hastily,

made, there can be little doubt that it has much influence in determining the immediate, though not the final, demand for the book. The reviewer's position is therefore one of some responsibility, too seldom felt and too often lightly assumed.

One way of reviewing a book is merely to give an abstract of its contents—of an elaborate scientific treatise, for example, to give the divisions and generalizations, of an argumentative work the positions attacked and those defended, of a novel an outline of the plot. This method has much to recommend it. It gives the reader a better idea of the nature of the book than the mere title can afford, while it does not thrust upon him personal opinions nor mislead him by what may possibly be an entirely wrong estimate: it is not likely either to prejudice the public or to injure the author.

But perhaps the public wants to know more. How does the book compare with other works by the same author? How does it compare with books by other authors in the same field? Does it contribute anything new or valuable to learning or literature? Does it show that the author was competent to undertake his task? Is it well written? In short, what are its merits and defects? To answer these questions requires considerable critical acumen coupled with a wide knowledge of men, books, and subjects. As the questions indicate, the method to be followed is largely that of comparison. We cannot properly estimate Carlyle's work apart from Richter's, nor Emerson's apart from Carlyle's. A new text-book on chemistry must be judged according as it represents the latest stages in the development of the

science, and is well adapted or not to the present methods of teaching it. Few reviewers however are able to deal in this way with all the books that come into their hands. The result is that the critical method of book reviewing is often looked upon with disfavor. Certain magazines have tried to find a way out of the difficulty by having every important book reviewed by a specialist in the department to which it belongs. The chief objection to this is that those most competent to judge of the subject-matter of a book do not always possess other important qualifications of a literary critic.

There is another question that a book review may very properly answer: What have the publishers done for the book? Where and by whom is it published? What are its size, style, and price? Is it well printed, tastefully bound? These indeed become the important questions in all cases of reprints, art books, souvenir books, editions de luxe, etc. Some familiarity with the printer's, engraver's, and bookbinder's arts is necessary in order to answer these questions well. And a little study of these arts, even from an outside point of view, will amply repay any student in the increased pleasure he will find in well selected type, restful proportions, clean press work, and appropriate bindings.

Let us take now, almost at random, a few examples of reviews. Here is a very brief notice of the latest number of a periodical :

*Short Stories* appears as a special Christmas number, with many pretty half-tone cuts and clever outline drawings by well-known artists. The tales are of exceptional interest, and among the authors are Frank Stockton, John Strange Winter, Alphonse Daudet, Henry Harland, and F. Anstey.

A compilation, issued apparently in the interests both of religion and of art, is described thus :

A dainty little book is "Selections from Isaac Pennington." The selections are extracts from letters of Pennington, who was a leader among the English Quakers. He was imprisoned five times because of his faith, but he bore all his sufferings with rare fortitude. His eldest daughter married William Penn, and the compiler of this book has added Penn's tribute to his friend. The little volume is full of wise counsel and true religion. It is bound in vellum cloth with gilt edges and is put up in a box. [Boston : Roberts Brothers. Price, 75 cents.]

A new edition of an old book requires different treatment :

Few books lend themselves more gracefully to illustration than Longfellow's "Hyperion," which is brought out in fine dress with a large number of half-tone reproductions of photographs of the scenery of the Rhine and of Switzerland. This early prose romance, in which the poet embalmed his own love, has always been a favorite, for it breaths pure sentiment and it embodies the reverence of a student of German literature for the masters that he loved. The illustrations have been well selected, and many of them are from photographs which are not common. One of the most effective is the picture of the old watch tower at Andernach. The book is bound in novel fashion and is put up in a pretty box. [Philadelphia : Porter & Coates. Price, \$3.50.]

As an example of the more serious work that may be done in this line by those who are at once scholars and critics, take the following by Mr. Brander Matthews in the September, 1892, number of *The Cosmopolitan* :

Mr. Bierce in *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* has chosen to abjure love altogether and to deal wholly with the other emotions—chiefly, indeed, with one of them, with the emotion of fear. Almost every one of the scant score of these tales is a study in the psychology of terror—the terror of men for the

most part brave, but here taken at a disadvantage and reduced to abject, craven, crawling, animal fear. The book abounds in ghostly and ghoulish adventures; it has a graveyard flavor to delight a resurrection man; and at last the reader revolts against the unredeemed monotony of insistent horror. There is only a tint of humor now and then, grim always and grewsome. But the power of these tales is indisputable; their brute-force is beyond question. Mr. Bierce has an astonishing faculty for the selection of the dramatic situation, plucked at the very climax and catastrophe of the drama and presented briefly and boldly and left to speak for itself. The strange sketch called Chickamauga, with its vision of a regiment of wounded men crawling silently through the dark woods, before the eyes of a little child, brings home the horror of war, the bloody ghastliness of it, as nothing else in literature except Tolstoi's Sebastopol, as nothing in art except Verestchagin's pictures. This, indeed, is what Mr. Bierce is, a literary Verestchagin, quite willing to declare the secrets of the charnel house. One of the Missing is a masterpiece of growing horror in the face of impending and inevitable death. Here the author is not carried beyond the bounds of art, as he is when he sets before us *The Coup de Grace*, unsavory and unpardonable. It is to be said also that Mr. Bierce abuses the trick of surprise; as Mr. Aldrich showed us in *Marjory Daw*, it is a legitimate device, but it is easily worn out. The sheer strength of these tales, rank as it is and unpleasant, is so marked that I wish Mr. Bierce would enlarge his formulas and figure for us some of the facts of life other than fear.

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## EXERCISE LXIX.

### LETTERS.

If it be assumed that the student is familiar with the conventional forms used in letter writing, there remains only to indicate and illustrate some of the qualities which it is desirable that letters should possess. Our

first attempts at composition have probably been in the form of letters, so that the elements of this art have been acquired through actual practice. But since it is an art, something can still be learned from study and from practice based upon that study.

There is scarcely an occupation or condition of life that does not call this art into play. And so we have letters of every variety, from brief notes of invitation to long state documents, from letters of business to letters of friendship and love. One who has learned how to express himself clearly, correctly, and concisely, and has learned, furthermore, that written communications do not differ materially from oral ones, may be trusted to write business letters and all ordinary letters of courtesy in a satisfactory manner. But whatever the form or contents of the epistle, one thing must be borne in mind, and that is that a letter is of all kinds of composition the most personal, and therefore subject to all the restrictions as well as open to all the liberties of our daily intercourse with one another. This means, for one thing, that it must be marked throughout by courtesy and kindly consideration for every just claim of the person addressed. Violation of these principles in conversation may find some little excuse in pleas of impulse, thoughtlessness, or provocation, but such pleas can hardly be advanced in extenuation of that which is written. Besides, if it is true that a word once spoken can never be recalled, a written word is attended with the additional danger that it may survive the forgetfulness of all who first beheld it.

Out of this same fact, that a letter is peculiarly personal in character, grows this injunction: Let it be

above all things natural. Naturalness, qualified only by a properly discreet reserve, constitutes the chief charm of an epistolary style. You write only because under the circumstances you cannot talk. If you are writing to a friend and your object is not purely a business one, then you want to convey to that friend something of yourself, you want to enable him to enjoy for a few moments your society. You can only do this by being in every word and in every thought your true self. There must be no posing and no insincerity. That self-consciousness which stands in the way of true self-expression is less pardonable here, perhaps, than in any other form of writing.

The intrinsic value and interest of the written letter will naturally depend on the personality that shines through it. Those delightful people whom everybody calls "interesting" are pretty sure to write interesting letters, and there can hardly fail to be some reflection of a great mind in the letters of a great man. Thus letters that were never intended to be anything more than mere epistles may rise to the rank of literature. For frank and spontaneous expression of feeling take the following letter of Edward FitzGerald's to his friend John Allen. The punctuation, it ought to be said, is FitzGerald's own :

DEAR ALLEN,

GELDESTONE HALL, Sept. 9, [1834].

I have really nothing to say, and I am ashamed to be sending this third letter all the way from here to Pembroke-shire for no earthly purpose : but I have just received yours : and you will know how very welcome all your letters are to me when you see how the perusal of this one has excited me to such an instant reply. It has indeed been a long time coming : but it is all



the more delicious. Perhaps you can't imagine how wistfully I have looked for it : how, after a walk, my eyes have turned to the table, on coming into the room, to see it. Sometimes I have been tempted to be angry with you : but then I thought that I was sure you would come a hundred miles to serve me, though you were too lazy to sit down to a letter. I suppose that people who are engaged in serious ways of life, and are of well-filled minds, don't think much about the interchange of letters with any anxiety : but I am an idle fellow, of a very ladylike turn of sentiment : and my friendships are more like loves, I think. Your letter found me reading the "Merry Wives of Windsor" too : I had been laughing aloud to myself : think of what another coat of happiness came over my former good mood. You are a dear good fellow, and I love you with all my heart and soul. The truth is I was anxious about this letter, as I really didn't know whether you were married or not — or ill — I fancied you might be anything, or anywhere. . . .

As to reading I have not done much. I am going through the Spectator : which people nowadays think a poor book : but I honor it much. What a noble kind of Journal it was ! There is certainly a good deal of what may be called 'pill,' but there is a great deal of wisdom, I believe, only it is couched so simply that people can't believe it to be real absolute wisdom. The little book you speak of I will order and buy. I heard from Thackeray, who is just upon the point of going to France ; indeed he may be there by this time. I shall miss him much. . . .

Farewell my dearest fellow : you have made me very happy to hear from you : and to know that all is so well with you. Believe me to be your ever affectionate friend,  
E. FITZGERALD.

It would be vain to contend that the above letter is interesting only because it was written by a man who made some valuable contributions to the sum of English literature. Surely the letter, giving us a glimpse of the true self of a fellow-being and bringing us for a moment into his immediate presence, is interesting in itself, and would be scarcely less so if we did not know

that it came from the same hand which has given us, in its English form, the priceless *Rubáiyát*.

Let us look at one example too from Horace Walpole, remembering that he had studied letter-writing as an art and wrote hoping for the appreciation of future generations. That there should be some "posing" in his case seems inevitable. The letter announces to a friend Walpole's return from France.

STRAWBERRY HILL, Oct. 16, 1769.

I arrived at my own Louvre last Wednesday night, and am now at my Versailles. Your last letter reached me but two days before I left Paris, for I have been an age at Calais and upon the sea. I could execute no commission for you, and, in truth, you gave me no explicit one; but I have brought you a bit of china, and beg you will be content with a little present, instead of a bargain. Said china is, or will be soon, in the Custom-House; but I shall have it, I fear, long before you come to London. . . .

I feel myself here like a swan, that, after living six weeks in a nasty pool upon a common, is got back into its own Thames. I do nothing but plume and clean myself, and enjoy the verdure and silent waves. Neatness and greenth are so essential in my opinion to the country, that in France, where I see nothing but chalk and dirty peasants, I seem in a terrestrial purgatory that is neither town nor country. The face of England is so beautiful, that I do not believe Tempe or Arcadia were half so rural; for both lying in hot climates, must have wanted the turf of our lawns. It is unfortunate to have so pastoral a taste, when I want a cane more than a crook. We are absurd creatures; at twenty, I loved nothing but London.

Consult Knight's *Half-Hours with the Best Letter-Writers*. Read, for all varieties of epistolary style, the published letters of Cowper, Gray, Pope, Lamb, Thackeray, Madame de Sévigné, Goethe, Thomas Jefferson, Washington Irving, Carlyle, and Emerson.

## EXERCISE LXX.

## DIARIES.

Akin to letter writing in some respects is dairy writing. It consists in recording the events that come within one person's daily experience, physical, intellectual, or spiritual, with or without comment. The result will be, even more markedly than in the case of letter writing, a reflection of the mind and life of the writer. If a letter exhibits that portion of one's inner nature which he is willing to disclose to others, a diary or journal presumably goes further and betrays phases of one's individuality that find expression only in moments of self-communion. For the truest diary is that which is intended for no eyes save those of the writer, though such is not likely to be couched in the best literary form.

It may be said indeed that, as in letters, coherence, symmetry, purpose, polish, the qualities by which we test composition in general, will not be demanded in the same degree here. And greater liberty may perhaps be allowed in the minor details of punctuation, sentence structure, etc. Still it would seem that if a journal is worth keeping at all, little would be lost and a great deal would be gained by giving due consideration even to these minor details. It can hardly be argued that this will interfere with naturalness or sincerity. There is no reason why one's real nature may not find just expression in correct as well as in incorrect form. And certainly it is no check upon spontaneity to cultivate the habit of putting a period

at the end of a sentence. Diary writing thus practised may serve the very useful end of affording good training in composition.

As in letter writing again, we shall expect here no attitudinizing or posing for effect. This may not be avoidable in the case of journals written with the possibility of publication in mind, as the *Journal* of the late Marie Bashkirtseff. And some have maintained indeed that no one who deliberately sits down to record his thoughts and feelings can entirely avoid posing even before himself. But this looks suspiciously like a contradiction of terms. However that be, it is well to remember that a journal loses its value in direct proportion as it is insincere.

The character of a diary will depend upon the purpose for which it is kept as well as upon the individuality of the keeper. It may have no other object than to preserve a consecutive and dated record of events and experiences. Or it may be treated as a companion and a confidant fitted to occupy the leisure of the dreamer or solace the hours of the solitary thinker. The first may become valuable in the future to the biographer or historian, and the second to the student of psychology or the lover of literature. Let us take as an example of the first an entry from the celebrated *Diary* of Samuel Pepys, English Secretary to the Admiralty.

*Apr. 8th, 1661.* — Up early, my Lady Batten knocking at her door that comes into one of my chambers. I did give directions to my people and workmen, and so about 8 o'clock we took barge at the Tower, Sir William Batten and his lady, Mrs. Turner, Mr. Fowler and I. A very pleasant passage and so to Gravesend, where we dined, and from thence a coach took them and me, and Mr. Fowler with some others came from Rochester to meet us, on

horseback. At Rochester, where alight at Mr. Alcock's and there drank and had good sport, with his bringing out so many sorts of cheese. Then to the Hill-house at Chatham, where I never was before, and I found a pretty pleasant house and am pleased with the arms that hang up there. Here we supped very merry, and late to bed; Sir William telling me that old Edgeborough, his predecessor, did die and walk in my chamber, did make me somewhat afeard, but not so much as for mirth's sake I did seem. So to bed in the treasurer's chamber.

Pepys's *Diary*, it will be seen, is filled with the minutest details, faithful, gossipy, untiring. There is little depth of thought or brilliancy of style. The composition is often slovenly, gauged even by the standards of the time, — a fault however that may find some extenuation when we consider what an immense amount of time and labor this record demanded daily of one whose official position was itself no sinecure. But though the interest sometimes flags, the value of the work is inestimable. We can read it and almost live for ourselves the life of an English official of the seventeenth century.

In strong contrast to this diary of a busy man of the world in the *Journal Intime* of Henri-Frédéric Amiel, the Genevese professor, philosopher, poet, and dreamer. Read a characteristic passage :

*2d April, 1864.* — To-day April has been displaying her showery caprices. We have had floods of sunshine followed by deluges of rain, alternate tears and smiles from the petulant sky, gusts of wind and storms. The weather is like a spoilt child whose wishes and expression change twenty times in an hour. It is a blessing for the plants, and means an influx of life through all the veins of the spring. The circle of mountains which bounds the valley is covered with white from top to toe, but two hours of sunshine would melt the snow away. The snow itself is but a new caprice,

a simple stage decoration ready to disappear at the signal of the scene-shifter.

How sensible I am to the restless change which rules the world. To appear, and to vanish,—there is the biography of all individuals, whatever may be the length of the cycle of existence which they describe, and the drama of the universe is nothing more. All life is the shadow of a smoke-wreath, a gesture in the empty air, a hieroglyph traced for an instant in the sand, and effaced a moment afterwards by a breath of wind, an air-bubble expanding and vanishing on the surface of the great river of being—an appearance, a vanity, a nothing. But this nothing is, however, the symbol of the universal being, and this passing bubble is the epitome of the history of the world.

The man who has, however imperceptibly, helped in the work of the universe, has lived; the man who has been conscious, in however small a degree, of the cosmical movement, has lived also. The plain man serves the world by his action and as a wheel in the machine; the thinker serves it by his intellect, and as a light upon its path. The man of meditative soul, who raises and comforts and sustains his travelling companions, mortal and fugitive like himself, plays a nobler part still, for he unites the other two utilities. Action, thought, speech, are the three modes of human life. The artisan, the savant, and the orator, are all three God's workmen.—(*Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Translation.*)

Published *Confessions*, such as those of Rousseau and De Quincey, are similar to journals in some respects. And Wilkie Collins has more than once turned the diary form to account in the field of fiction by using it to work out the characters and plots of his novels.

## EXERCISE LXXI.

### DIALOGUES.

To invent a conversation is not easy, even for a good converser. To report one that has actually taken place

may not be difficult but can scarcely serve any worthy literary purpose. If an ordinary conversation were registered in a phonograph and repeated to us by this means, we should find it, divested of the charm lent to it by the presence of the speakers, decidedly barren and uninteresting. How much more barren and uninteresting then must it be if still further divested of the very inflections and intonations of the voice. This inevitable loss, in written dialogue, must be compensated for if possible. To this end the principles of selection must be studiously observed. The tentative beginnings of a conversation, the unfortunate slips of the tongue, the jarring discords, the painful pauses, the dreary stretches of unprofitable small talk, must all be banished to give place to the flashes of wit and flow of wisdom. Conversation thus constructed may become entertaining even on the printed page.

It may be said that the reader is to supply in imagination the vocal and facial accompaniments. But if he is to do this spontaneously, without study or conscious effort, then the words and phrases must carry with them the certain signs of these accompaniments. That is to say, they must be spontaneous themselves and indicative of feelings as well as of thoughts. And this indeed is the principal secret of successful dialogue writing.

There is another feature to be preserved. A great source of interest in the interchange of talk is the constant uncertainty of the nature of the rejoinders, and the resulting surprises. The difficulty of preserving this will be apparent when one reflects that in the invented conversation the same person must supply all the speeches and rejoinders. He cannot bring to the

product all the versatility of talents, the breadth and diversity of experience, and consequent varying points of view that a mixed company of people bring. The best that he can do is to conceive each speaker as distinctly and vividly as possible and to make him speak always "in character." This is the essential thing in dramatic dialogue and may best be studied in the plays of Shakespeare. Browning has been criticised for making his child characters speak like grown people, like Browning himself.

Another kind of dialogue known to literature and almost as old as the dramatic is the philosophical, represented by the dialectics of Plato. It may be studied in Professor Jowett's excellent translation of Plato. Walter Savage Landor's delightful *Imaginary Conversations* may be mentioned here as another variety of successful literature that is purely dialogistic in character.

When dialogue is mingled with ordinary description and narration the problem is somewhat different. Some difficulties are removed. The characters of the different speakers may be described, as may also their actions and situations. On the other hand the personality of the author is thrust between us and the characters and there is danger that it may become so plainly visible as to obliterate the outlines of the characters themselves. A technical difficulty is found too in the management of the parenthetical but necessary and frequently recurring "said he" or its equivalent. The various devices for overcoming this difficulty may be studied with profit. Let it be remembered however that the variations on this formula are not equally appropriate in all places: something besides the neces-



sity for variety must enter into the consideration. The best employment of them will be that which leaves the reader entirely unconscious that such words have been used at all. Study and criticise a page of conversation in any novel that comes to hand. As in dramas the conversation is the whole work, so in novels it is merely the accident, one of the means, though rarely a subordinate one, for developing the plot and characters. Between the two lie such works as Dr. Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, in which the conversation of the characters is the principal thing, though relieved by remarks and confidences of the author which really constitute only a more delightful conversation between him and us.

Much might be said here of a practice that has grown up of late among story writers and even poets, but as it has already been carried to extremes perhaps it is best mentioned only to convey this warning. The practice referred to is the use of dialect. When used accurately it has a scientific and historic value, no doubt, but a good ear and long familiarity with the spoken dialect are necessary to insure this accuracy. On the other hand, when it is used as a literary vehicle, it may be questioned whether more is not lost by the impediments it throws before the reader than is gained by the flavor of novelty and fidelity to character which it imparts. The Scotch dialect of Burns's poems and the more recent Hoosier dialect of James Whitecomb Riley's are familiar to all. In novels, Walter Scott, Geo. MacDonald, Wm. Black, and many others have also availed themselves of Scotch dialects. The negro patois of our own country is best exhibited by Joel Chandler Harris. The

peculiarities of speech of the creoles of the South have served Geo. W. Cable more than once, as the dialect of the western miners has served Bret Harte.

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## EXERCISE LXXII.

### HUMOR.

Humor has long held a legitimate place in literature, and has had its representatives in many times and lands, from Aristophanes to Cervantes and from Cervantes to Washington Irving. Naturally it has changed much in character with the times and lands, as all literature must change, perhaps even more than most literature changes, but this fact has not prevented it, when of the highest order, from preserving an abiding place. It would be folly to contend that Molière's fame rests solely on his truthful delineation of character and manners for the purpose of satirizing them, or that Chaucer lives in spite of his jests. Humor has unquestionably been one of the saving elements of their work.

On the other hand it may be doubted whether humor alone could save any work to fame. If this quality endures, it endures along with poetry, history, satire, pathos, morality, wisdom. If Aristophanes and Molière, Chaucer and Cervantes, Lamb and Irving, are read to-day, it is for something besides their mere wit and humor. They did not disdain to provoke a smile or even raise a loud laugh, but they knew that there are purposes in literature higher than these. Wit and humor are the incidentals, not the essentials, the form, it may be, not the substance.

Were this all that could be said of humor, it would not claim special attention here. It would have to pass with simplicity, pathos, imagination, sublimity, and all those qualities of subject-matter or style which a writer will employ according to his purpose and ability. But in the United States and in the present century a demand has been found or created for humor pure and simple, wit that aims to do nothing more than amuse. Thus there has arisen a form of writing almost as distinctive as history or fiction. It may be evanescent, though there is little evidence yet of a falling off in the demand. *Puck*, *Judge*, *Life*, number their readers by the thousand; Bill Nye still finds lecturing remunerative; and Mark Twain's books in our public libraries are worn out faster than they can be replaced. Certainly, whatever may be true of the form, the separate productions are evanescent enough; this is attested by the fact that the "funny paper" is far more conspicuous on the railway car and in public waiting-rooms than on the drawing-room table, and that we have to seek the humorous book in the circulating library rather than on our private shelves. The humorous writers are themselves well aware of this, though they have combined with their public to elevate humorous writing to the dignity of a profession, and follow it, content if they can win the fleeting popularity of a day. Who shall say that they are wrong, or that we are wrong to encourage them? Life would be serious indeed without its pastimes and recreations. And humor is the natural recreation of the intellect. Every man is the better for keeping a private jester in the court of his fancy.

But he who would make a life profession of amusing the public must be a "fellow of infinite jest," and there are comparatively few such. Considering therefore the limitations of the utmost success which even the naturally gifted humorist can hope to attain, it would certainly seem very foolish for one without the gift to aspire to the attainment. Still, every newspaper must have its paragrapher, and the meetings of the students' literary societies would lose interest if the more serious orations and essays were not interspersed with some pieces in the lighter vein.

First of all bear in mind that forced humor is not humor at all. It must be spontaneous. Do not imagine that because some of our best humorists have been men of many sorrows, their funny sayings have therefore been uttered against their will. Or if possibly against their will, certainly not against their propensity. There are minds so constructed that they will fashion of the very tints of sorrow pictures to provoke mirth. They dwell at some mysterious point of view from which they can see the funny side of everything. Men with such minds may sometimes weary of this visual gift, and then they may have to exercise their will-power to keep from shutting their eyes — that is all. Not necessarily he who tries to be funny, but he who has to try in order to be funny at all is the one who fails. We may laugh at the latter if we do not pity him too much: we shall certainly not laugh with him.

Nor is that humor of a commendable kind which makes us laugh *at* any one. This is no less true than trite. It belongs to the ethics of fun-making. It merely means that the laws of courtesy are never held in

abeyance. Coarseness and vulgarity too are quite as far removed as incivility or cruelty from the sphere of genuine humor. Add irreverence.

Exaggeration, hyperbole, is a common resort of one who aims to make another laugh. It is legitimate if only it be violent enough that its intent shall not be mistaken. Besides, the ludicrousness of the effect seems to be in direct proportion to the violence of the hyperbole. But there is a better humor than this. If we were to express our preference between "a falsehood plausibly pretending to be true" "and a truism pretending to be a novelty," for intensity and certainty of ludicrous effect we should unhesitatingly choose the latter. Exaggeration grows wearisome but the truth seldom palls. And we do not need to invent absurdities: human life is full of them, if we can only see them. Still it is not these that Professor Nichol has in mind when he speaks of the humorous effects due to "truisms pretending to be a novelty." He is thinking rather of those truths that are so self-evident that we are surprised into a smile when we hear them stated gravely as if they were the result of some late discovery or some mature judgment. Thus it is that we cannot help laughing at Abraham Lincoln's deliberate opinion that a man's legs "ought to be long enough to reach the ground." So we laugh too, when asked why the Northerners shake a salt-box while the Southerners tap it on the bottom, to learn that it is for the very obvious purpose of getting the salt out. If one will analyze a large number of witty sayings he will find that the principles underlying them are very few. The element of surprise is perhaps always most conspicuous, and it

is generally effected in one of the ways indicated above.

Without going outside of the field of American literature, one can cite as examples of the finest humor Irving's *Knickerbocker* and Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. For what is known as "American humor," though it is of too many types to be distinguished thus, we naturally turn to the works of those writers who have confined themselves to this field, Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, Mark Twain. Much of Mr. Burdette's work is not unworthy of standing by the side of these masters in this department. And new writers are constantly developing new veins.

A deliberate attempt at writing a humorous sketch is an undertaking of doubtful expediency, and the student who makes it must not have too much confidence. The result may be laughable in a way very different from that in which it was intended. One's success at least can be easily estimated for one's readers will see at once whether he has any gift of humor or not. We may have very diverse ideas as to the best kind of humor but we are all pretty well agreed as to what is distinctly not humor. And at the worst, failure in this line is not very much to be deplored, unless one aims at success in some higher field of literature where humor is a requisite.

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## EXERCISE LXXIII.

### THE SHORT STORY.

In our survey of the field of composition (Parts I. and II.), which aimed to be systematic and at least

approximately complete, we were brought to the threshold of literature proper, of creative literature. No exact definition of this term needs to be attempted here; suffice it to say that it is literature which deals not with external facts and events as such merely, but either creates fresh material in the likeness of these or presents these to us idealized and glorified by the selection, organization, and interpretation of a master intellect. In this department anything like an attempt at instruction must prove peculiarly barren of results. But art has its part to play even here, and where art is demanded it would be idle to assume that nothing helpful can be said. What little can be said in this place must of course be confined to the broadest principles.

Creative literature in prose dress commonly takes the form of fiction, by whatever name — tales, romances, novels — it may be known. Prose fiction is nothing new, but its wonderful growth in the present century has marked an era in the history of literature. And even within this period there have been great changes. The voluminous novel of a former generation has largely given way to the short story, very different in character from the old tales which led up to the elaborate novel. In this form, even novel-writing can afford valuable and delightful exercise in composition. To this, then, be our efforts directed.

One is reminded here of the "story" written by a pupil in response to a request from the teacher for an impromptu ten-minute sketch. The pupil sat thoughtfully until the last minute and then rapidly wrote, "I am a worn-out shoe. My coffin is the ash-barrel, my grave the dump." Homely as this is, it illustrates the

possibility of telling a complete and symmetrical story within the compass of a few words. That is what the short story aims to do. And therein chiefly it differs from the oldtime tale. The latter relates an episode in the life of one or more persons, and it is felt to be only an episode. The short story tries to combine with brevity of expression many of the elements of the long novel. It seizes upon what is characteristic or typical. If it is a single incident, it may be the great shaping power of a life, or it may be the crisis of one, the inevitable outcome of habit and character. It will be seen at once that success in this field will depend, more than upon anything else, upon the writer's mastery of the art of selection. The questions kept constantly before him will be, What more can I exclude and yet tell my story? How can I give a history in a chapter, a chapter in a sentence? make a word serve for a scene, a deed for a character? To grasp a situation at the climax and reproduce it for the reader without further explanation or circumlocution — that is the task.

The following are very good examples of what can be done in this line even by inexpert writers :

#### THE RIVALS.

There were two rivals in our class. It was near the close of the year and they had maintained nearly equal standing. We were taking the final examination in arithmetic. The last example was particularly hard. One of the rivals sat in front of me, the other just across the aisle.

The hour was drawing to a close and the boy in front of me had completed his paper. The boy opposite had worked rapidly till he came to the last example; then he hesitated, and stopped.

The hour was nearly up when the teacher left the room for a moment. From a few seats back came a loud whisper; "How



do you work the last?" The answer was given. The boy opposite brightened up and leaned forward to complete his work. Then he hesitated, blushed, laid down his pen, and folded his paper.

J. A. L.

#### IN THE CEMETERY.

A few Sundays since I strolled out to the cemetery. Here and there upon the mounds were seated groups of young girls talking and laughing loudly. A man, leading a smiling child, a little girl perhaps four years old, passed by with bowed head and approached a long newly made grave. The father knelt uncovered at its side. The little one glanced up with smiling wonderment, then knelt beside him. I looked again; the father had risen and before leaving was reverently replacing the dirt of the mound, where a careless foot had marred its symmetry. The child stopped, made a few similar gestures with a tiny hand, then turned with a satisfied smile to the father and they passed on. The laughing of the heedless groups jarred upon me and I walked away.

A.

The above are single situations merely, and may not be pure fiction. But the short story may be much wider of scope, may be indeed a novel in miniature. The resources of this literary form have as yet been only partially developed by English and American writers. The reader who is interested in the subject is referred to the many short stories of Francis Bret Harte, Frank R. Stockton, Richard Harding Davis, Mary E. Wilkins.

It will be seen further that in the writing of fiction in its broadest sense there is scarcely a device or principle of composition which we have alluded to that will not come into play. Indeed what form of discourse is useless here? Certainly not narration or description; nor exposition. Is it argument or persuasion? You will find actual sermons in the novels

of George Eliot ; and public speeches, trials at law, philosophical dialogues and disquisitions, abound in works of pure fiction. Mastery therefore of the whole art of composition is a requisite to the novelist's highest success.

To be sure, something more is needed — the power of genius, the creative touch, which alone can make a work of fiction live, whether that work aim to portray life as it is or life as it ought to be. But this something is incommunicable save by inspiration. Here then we stop, full in the front too of the highest form of creative literature — poetry — which, like fiction, would require a special treatise even for its technical side.

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