

**A SCHOOL MANUAL OF ENGLISH
COMPOSITION, FOR ADVANCED
GRAMMAR GRADES, AND FOR
HIGH SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES,
ETC.**

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A School Manual of English Composition, for Advanced Grammar Grades, and for High Schools, Academies, Etc. by William Swinton

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WILLIAM SWINTON

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OF
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FOR ADVANCED GRAMMAR GRADES, AND FOR
HIGH SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, ETC.

BY WILLIAM SWINTON,
AUTHOR OF "HARPER'S LANGUAGE SERIES," "BIBLE WORD-BOOK," ETC.



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P R E F A C E.

THIS little book is not an addition to the already large number of rhetorics and other works on the theory and mysteries of style. It is strictly a manual for school-work, and has been made with special reference to the rational remodelling recently accomplished, or now in the way of being accomplished, in the Courses of Study in our public schools—a remodelling in which language-training for the first time receives the attention that is its due. The writer trusts that inquiring teachers will find it in harmony with their views and aims.

In the plan here adopted, composition is begun with the very commencement of the study, and is carried on *pari passu* with the development of rules and principles. It is a matter of common experience that children's power of producing, in an empirical way, is much in advance of their knowledge of the rationale of writing; hence, in the present work, pupils are not kept back from the improving exercise of actual composition until they have mastered the complicated details of rhetorical theory. It should be added, however, that the demands made on the scholar will not be found beyond his powers. He is provided with the material to work on, and his attention is limited to the process of building this material into shape—the author's conviction being that training in the *art of expression* is as much as can wisely be aimed at in school composition. Pupils must first be taught *how to write at all*, before they can be shown how to write *well*—a maxim that has never been out of mind in the making of this book.

In Chapters I.-IV. the scholar is initiated into the construction and combination of sentences—under which head a great variety of practical exercises will be found.

In Chapter V. it is sought to extend his resources of expression by accustoming him to vary both the structure and the phraseology of sentences.

In Chapter VI. what can advantageously be taught to boys and girls respecting style is presented in a form which the author hopes will be found both fresh and fruitful.

Chapter VII. deals with the composition of Themes and Essays, on models adapted to a fair estimate of the pupil's capacity.

Chapter VIII. presents a summary of Prosody and Versification.

It has seemed to the writer that there is room for a school manual of prose composition of medium size, arranged on a simple and natural plan, and designed, not to teach the theory of style and criticism, but to give school-children between the ages of twelve and sixteen a fair mastery of the art of writing good English, for the ordinary uses of life. Such he has endeavored to make the present book.

The acknowledgments of the author are due to the following works: *English Prose Composition*, by JAMES CURRIE; *Cornwall's Young Composer*; *Dalgleish's English Composition*; *Armstrong's English Composition*.

WILLIAM SWINTON.

NOTE TO REVISED EDITION.

The need for a new set of electrotype plates arising, the author has availed himself of the opportunity to make a thorough revision of this work, and to add the chapter (VIII.) on Prosody and Versification.

W. S.

September, 1877.

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ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

INTRODUCTION.

1. **Composition** (that is, *literary composition*) is the art of expressing thought by means of language.

I. The art of composition is regulated by the principles of rhetoric, or the science of the expression of thought. "Rhetoric," says Bain, "discusses the means whereby language, spoken or written, may be rendered effective."

II. Rhetoric cannot supply us with thoughts. These must originate in the mind itself, by the operation, conscious or unconscious, of the intellectual faculties. But when we have thoughts which we wish to put forth, rhetorical art instructs us in the best method of expressing and arranging them—in other words, of giving them literary form.

2. **Sentence, Paragraph, Discourse.**—The expression of a single complete thought is a *sentence*.

The expression of a connected series of thoughts (or "train of thought") is effected by means of a series of sentences, forming a *paragraph*.

The development of a whole subject constitutes *discourse*, written or spoken, in one or other of its manifold forms.

The most general division of *discourse* in its largest sense gives two forms of composition: I. COMPOSITION IN PROSE. II. COMPOSITION IN VERSE. Prose composition assumes a great variety