

**STUDIES IN
COMPOSITION. A
TEXT-BOOK FOR
ADVANCED CLASSES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649539963

Studies in Composition. A Text-Book for Advanced Classes by David Pryde

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DAVID PRYDE

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STUDIES IN COMPOSITION.

A TEXT-BOOK FOR ADVANCED CLASSES.

BY

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EDINBURGH:

OLIVER AND BOYD, TWEEDDALE COURT.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

1871.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

302. g 102

PRINTED BY OLIVER AND BOYD, EDINBURGH.

PREFACE.

THIS text-book is intended for pupils who have mastered the ordinary rules of Grammar and Composition.

It starts from the great principle that correct thinking is the more important part of Composition; that a correct idea is the source of all true excellence in style; and that, therefore, accuracy of thought should always be studied along with accuracy of expression.

Accordingly, the chief parts of the work are devoted to *Observation* and *Reading*, the two great sources of our knowledge; and a course of Exercises is prescribed which trains the student, in the first place, to draw correct ideas from what he observes and reads; and, in the second place, to express these ideas with the greatest effect.

But, in treating a subject, the pupil is often at a loss where to begin, in what order to take up the details, and where to end; and after his essay is completed he feels that he has failed to express his ideas fully, and that his style sadly wants both elegance and graphic force. Therefore two chapters are introduced, the one on *Method* and the other on *Style*, the former preceding those on

Observation and *Reading*, and the latter coming after them.

When the pupils are advanced, it is a mistake to make them plod through mere routine work without illustrating the nature and utility of what they do. They have become rational beings, and they ought to know the *reason* of every one of their tasks. Accordingly, in this book their attention is very much called to the *theory* of Composition and Literature. In the different chapters they learn the laws of literary method, the natural and simple way of describing any object of observation, the mode of extracting the substance of our reading without adopting the words or even many of the details, and the great movements by which an author attains excellence in style. This information they are expected to master thoroughly.

The efficiency of this system has been thoroughly tested. It has been taught for several years to students of both sexes with very satisfactory results. The pupils, it has been found, take a lively interest both in what they see during their everyday life and in what they read; they acquire the habit of forming distinct and connected opinions about people, things, and books; and when writing, even although it is only a letter, they can convey a clear and forcible idea of a subject.

D. P.

EDINBURGH, September 1871.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	7

CHAPTER I.

METHOD.

Method a Necessity—Founded on Law of Association— Three Kinds of Method—Narrative—Circumstantial— Picturesque—Mixed Method—Advantages,	18
--	----

CHAPTER II.

OBSERVATION.

Composition, like the Fine Arts, should be studied from Nature—A Course of Studies—Persons—Rooms—Houses —Towns—Weather—Incidents—Landscapes—States of Consciousness—Works of Art—Other Subjects,	39
---	----

CHAPTER III.

READING.

Reading an Art—Imagination the chief Faculty employed in it—Three Powers of this Faculty, all requiring to be cultivated—Accurate Representation—Generalizing Re- presentation—Creative Representation.	81
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

STYLE.

	PAGE
Proper Method of Criticising and Imitating Great Authors —Their chief Characteristics—Wide Sympathy—Com- plete View—Method—Abandonment—Graphic Expres- sion—Figurative Language—Power of making Com- mon Things Interesting.	104

STUDIES IN COMPOSITION.



INTRODUCTION.

THERE are many valuable treatises on English Composition. The humbler text-books point out the different parts of a sentence, teach the art of combining them, and prescribe numerous exercises to the pupil. The more advanced works, such as those by Blair, Campbell, and Whately, descant upon the higher graces of style with great clearness and fulness. Both classes of books, if studied carefully, will be of service to the student. They will make him a critic; and when he writes they will enable him to lop off the superfluities of his sentences.

But, at the same time, they aid him very little in the actual work of composition.* He soon

* Even Cicero admits that his treatise on Rhetoric was of no practical use in forming an orator.