

extreme position taken by some, that all practice in theme-writing is time thrown away; but after a costly experience of the drudgery that composition work forces on teacher and pupil, we would say emphatically that there is no educational method at present that involves so enormous an outlay of time, energy, and money, with so correspondingly small a result. To neglect the teaching of literature for the teaching of composition, or to assert that the second is the more important, is like showing a hungry man how to work his jaws instead of giving him something to eat. In order to support this with evidence, let us take the experience of a specialist who investigated the question by reading many hundred sophomore compositions in two of our leading colleges, where the natural capacity and previous training of the students were fairly equal. In one college every freshman wrote themes steadily through the year, with an accompaniment of sound instruction in rhetorical principles; in the other college every freshman studied

Shakspeare, with absolutely no training in rhetoric and with no practice in composition. A comparison of the themes written in their sophomore year by these students showed that technically the two were fully on a par. That is weighty and most significant testimony.

If the teachers of English in secondary schools were people of real culture themselves, who both knew and loved literature, who tried to make it attractive to their pupils, and who were given a sufficient time-allotment to read a number of standard books with their classes, the composition question would largely take care of itself. Mere training in theme-writing can never take the place of the acquisition of ideas, and the boy who thinks interesting thoughts will usually write not only more attractively, but more correctly, than the one who has worked tread-mill fashion in sentence and paragraph architecture. The difference in the teacher's happiness, vitality, and consequent effectiveness is too obvious to mention.



OPEN LETTERS

The Century's Printer on The Century's Type.

THE first number of this magazine (November, 1870) appeared in a modernized old-style type which was then something of a novelty. It had never been used in any similar publication, and it gave distinction to the page. It had authority in its favor, as the outgrowth of a style introduced by William Caslon of London about 1720, and then so pleasingly cut that it broke down every attempt at rivalry. For seventy years it was commended as incomparably the best cut of type,

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuv

STYLE OF THORNE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzM

STYLE OF DIDOT.

Quousque tandem abutère, C

STYLE OF BODONI.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzWLNCFMI

A FAVORITE FRENCH STYLE.

The Poetic style is more condensed, with more of sharp hair-line.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy

A LIGHT-FACE STYLE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzZIB

A SCOTCH-FACE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzMH

STYLE OF THE FIRST CASLON.

but it went out of fashion. At the beginning of the present century readers complained of its angularity and grayness. They demanded new styles, and type-founders provided them in profusion: the Thorne fat-face, of prodigious blackness; the Didot round-face, not quite as black or fat-faced; the Bodoni face, with round letters and sharp hair-lines; the French poetic-face, compressed to the extreme of tenuity; the so-called Scotch-face (really devised by the late S. N. Dickinson of Boston, although first cut in Edinburgh); and worst of all, the skeleton light-face, with its razor-edged hair-lines and needle-like points at the ends of stems. The types in fashion during the first third of this century were properly stigmatized by Hansard as disorderly, heterogeneous, and disgraceful: readers tired of them.

When Pickering and Whittingham revived the Caslon old-style in 1850, using the identical matrices of the old master, the connoisseurs said, «Now at last we have returned to simplicity and beauty: this is perfection.» Yet it was admired by bibliophiles only; dainty readers did not approve of its angular letters and its disproportioned capitals. Accepted for reprints of old books, it was rejected for modern work. To make it palatable to the general reader, type-founders devised a «modernized old-style,» in which harsh features were modified and new features of greater delicacy were added. So changed, it became a more salable letter, but it never found marked favor with the ordinary newspaper or the book publisher. Critics said of it that the strong features of the Caslon face had been suppressed, and that the new features were no improvement; that it had been made lighter, sharper, and broader, until its true character had been cut to pieces. Bibliophiles still prefer the cut of Caslon; with all its admitted faults, it is blacker,

clearer, and more readable. The average reader rejects the angularities of the old and the new cut, and prefers the symmetry of types of modern fashion.

In the bewildering variety of faces devised during this century, one peculiarity, the sharp hair-line (a fashion introduced by Bodoni and Didot, in imitation of the delicate lines of the copper-plate printer), has never been changed. When printing was done upon wet paper, against an elastic blanket, the hair-line was necessarily thickened by its impress against the yielding paper, which overlapped the sides of every line. Under this treatment the hair-line appeared thicker in print than in type, and was unobjectionable to printer or reader; but when the new method began (as it did in 1872) of printing on dry and smooth paper against an inelastic surface, the hair-lines and light faces of types were not thickened at all. From an engraver's point of view, new types so printed were exquisitely sharp and clean; but from a reader's point of view, the general effect of the print was relatively mean and wiry, gray and feeble. Each letter lost some of its individuality. A reader of imperfect eyesight could not see the razor-edged hair-lines that connected the thicker strokes; he had to guess at the identity of many letters. A new style of delicate but weak presswork came in fashion. The readable presswork produced by all good printers during the first half of this century was supplanted by feeble impressions that compelled continual strain of eyesight.

In the mean time a great change has taken place in the taste of readers, who have wearied of light types and gray impressions. There is an unmistakable demand for bold and stronger print. William Morris has printed books in many styles of letters; all of them are black and rugged, yet they find readers and buyers. American type-founders have recently introduced other styles of bold and black letter—for publishers and advertisers, as well as for bibliophiles. The «Jenson,» the «Monotone,» and the «De Vinne» are in high favor with all, not for their novelty of form, but for their greater legibility. With these evidences before them of a general preference for bolder types, the publishers of THE CENTURY decided that they would swim with the tide, and have new types of larger face and thicker hair-lines.

According to old rules, roman types would be bolder and more readable when made larger and wider. Experiments made with broad letters proved that increased expansion did not always secure increased legibility. The broad and round faces which seemed so beautiful in the large-margined pages of Bodoni and Didot were not all beautiful (quite the reverse) when printed in double columns on a page with narrow margins. To use types in which the thick strokes of each type are unduly spread apart on a page with narrow margins is an incongruity that cannot be justified. When margins are ample, and space is not pinched, types may be broad and even expanded. When the page is over-full, the types should be compressed to suit the changed condition. The fault of over-broad type is most noticed in books of poetry, in which the narrowness of the measure compels an overturning and mangling of lines, a waste of space, and needless irritation to the reader. Experiment proved that a book-type moderately compressed and properly cut was as readable as a round or expanded type. Compressed types, first made in Holland in 1732, ever since

have been more largely used than types of any other cut by the printers of France and southern Europe. In dictionaries, and books of two or more columns to the page, the compressed face is a necessity. The slightness of the compression in this new face will be perceived at a glance in a comparison of the alphabets of the old and the new face as here submitted. The new face is as

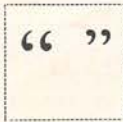
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzaBCDEFGHIJS

THE NEW FACE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzaBCDEFGHL

THE OLD FACE.

wide as the old; it has as much open-space within as without each letter, and as many letters to the line; it has the greater clearness of a thickened hair-line. It seems to be compressed only because it is taller, but this increase of height is only sixty-five ten-thousandths ($\frac{65}{100000}$) of an inch.

The so-called *new* quotation-marks are not at all new. They may be noticed, in almost the same form as they now appear in this magazine, in the books of those excellent printers, the Didots of Paris, at the close of the last century, and they have ever since been used by all French printers. When British publishers decided to use quotation-marks their type-founders had no characters for the purpose, and did not make them. Whether this refusal was due to the unwillingness of the British printer to pay for a new character, or to the prevalent dislike of everything French, cannot be decided; all we know is that they decided to imitate them with the unfit characters in stock. These characters were two inverted commas and two conjoined apostrophes—characters never intended, and not at all fitted, for the purpose. Imperfect as they were, habit has kept them in use for about a century. There are serious mechanical objections to these makeshift devices. The apostrophes and commas are not mates; the apostrophes at the end of the quotation are together than the beginning; the round marks are not in beginning and high-

 thinner and closer
 commas at its be-
 bodies of these
 line,—low at the
 at the end,—put-
 an unsightly man-
 ner. They are the only characters in ordinary use that are thrust up at the top of the line. It follows that they leave an ungainly blotch of white below, and so produce an appearance of uneven and unworkmanlike spacing. For this reason, if for no other, the form should be altered. The German method of marking quotations with special characters is but a trifle more uncouth, viz.: „“ The simplicity of the French quotes have led to their general adoption in Spain and Italy: their adoption by American and English printers is only a question of time.

For more than fifty years critics have complained of the feeble printing of new books. «Why not use blacker ink? Why not give us the readable pages we find in old books?» It is a sufficient answer to this protest to say that upon the sharp-lined and narrow-stemmed types now in greatest use strong and bold presswork is simply impossible. One might as well try to write boldly with a crow-quill pen. The new type here presented attempts only one correction, and that is the great fault of an

over-sharp hair-line. It is only a short step toward the general improvement desired, yet it is a step in the right direction, as may be seen in the approving criticisms that follow.

Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. write that they «entirely approve of your successful attempt at a text-type with thickened hair-lines.» Of course they prefer the smaller and rounder face devised years ago by the late Henry O. Houghton, after a lifelong dissatisfaction with the weak types of his time; but they admit that THE CENTURY face is wonderful for the effect it produces of a large size on a relatively small body.

Mr. J. A. St. John, an expert designer of many approved styles of type, writes: «I note very little to change in the new face.»

Mr. J. S. Cushing of the Norwood Press congratulates us «upon having at last got the right thing; the types make a handsome page; it is the most readable long-primer I ever saw. The new quotation-marks are a little hard to become accustomed to at first, but on the whole I like them very much when used double; the single quotes are not so pleasing. The small type is remarkably beautiful.»

Mr. J. W. Phinney, manager of the Dickinson Type-Foundry of Boston, writes that «the shapes and widths of the letters are excellent, and the completeness in detail noticeable. The relation between the lower-case, capitals and small capitals is perfect—the most complete that I have ever seen in any roman face. The French quotes, the setwise beveled dash, etc., are pleasing innovations that should have been made years ago.»

The story of the designing of this face is too full of technical detail to interest the casual reader. Perhaps it is enough to say that each character (first drawn on the enlarged scale of ten inches high) was scrutinized by editor and publisher, printer and engraver, and often repeatedly altered before it was put in the form of a working model. Only a maker of instruments of precision can appreciate the subservient tools, gauges, and machines that show aberrations of a ten-thousandth part of an inch; only an expert punch-cutter can understand why minute geometrical accuracy was a work of necessity upon some letters, and why it was discarded in others, for the humoring of optical illusions in the reader. Type-making does not tell its story; like other arts, it hides its methods.

Theodore L. De Vinne.

College Women and Matrimony, again.

THE article by Miss Shinn on «The Marriage Rate of College Women,» published in the October CENTURY, has attracted wide attention. It was of special interest to me, because I had just prepared a somewhat similar article on the careers of Vassar women, which was published in the November «Forum.» Miss Shinn based her calculations on the register of the A. C. A. (Association of Collegiate Alumnae), which gives the names and addresses of 1805 women, graduates of fifteen separate and coeducational colleges. I took the records of a single college, Vassar,—the only one, so far as I know, from which approximately complete information can be obtained,—and I computed percentages for 1082 women.

As Miss Shinn is a graduate of the University of California and a resident of that State, and as I am a graduate of Vassar and a resident of New Hampshire, we have the advantage of opposite points of view, both as regards location and coeducation. It occurs to me that a comparison of the two articles, with some further statements on my part, may not be uninteresting.

The register of the A. C. A. furnishes the only record of a large number of women graduates of various colleges; and yet the membership,—1805,—large as it is, is only a fraction of the whole number of women who have been graduated from these institutions. Vassar has the largest membership in the A. C. A.,—417,—about 38.5 per cent. of her graduates. Wellesley comes next, with 364 members out of 1066 graduates, a little more than 34 per cent. Smith has 287 members out of a total of 852, a little less than 34 per cent. In all these totals the class of '95 is not included, because it was not eligible to membership when the last register of the A. C. A. was issued. Of the 3000 alumnae of these three colleges only 1068 are members of the A. C. A.

Twelve other colleges—all coeducational but Bryn Mawr—are represented by a membership of 737. It is not easy to obtain facts about the alumnae of so many coeducational colleges, but if their representation is no larger in proportion than that of the separate colleges, the A. C. A., important society as it is, contains only little more than one third of the whole number of college women in the country.

Possibly Miss Shinn's conclusions, just as they are in the main, might have been modified if she could have obtained facts about a proportionately larger number of college women. This idea was suggested by several of her statements. She says the majority of college women are school-teachers, and mentions that 63 per cent. of the California branch of the A. C. A. are thus engaged. In the whole number of Vassar graduates, including all those recorded as having taught in any way for one year or more, I find only 37.6 per cent. This may be partly due to the fact, which I have seen stated, that graduates of a coeducational college, of which the California branch contains many, are more likely to engage in a gainful occupation than the graduates of a woman's college. But another reason may be that the A. C. A. draws its membership more largely from teachers than from any other class. In the multiplicity of societies and clubs of the present day women are obliged to make a selection, and perhaps the A. C. A. may appeal more strongly to teachers than to domestic women, especially when the latter live in towns remote from the great centers.

Miss Shinn finds only thirty-four physicians in the A. C. A., and very few graduates engaged in other professions or in business. In this I think either the facts must be wanting, or that the A. C. A. must contain an abnormally large proportion of teachers. In the roll of Vassar alumnae, which contains less than 60 per cent. as many names as the A. C. A., I found twenty-five physicians, and was surprised to find the number so small. There ought to be at least forty-two in the A. C. A., if it contains the proportion that even one woman's college shows.

The register of the A. C. A., giving, as it does, merely the addresses and advanced degrees of its mem-