

"I CAN'T WRITE."

"I can't!" "I can't!" "I can't write a composition!" It comes from a score of youthful voices, and a score of hearts are aching at the very thought of the matter.

You can't? There's a fib! You can't "cross the Atlantic in a paper boat," or make a voyage to the moon, for these are impossibilities. But the art of putting words together in our mother language is a safe and easy possibility—quite within the bounds of a boy's or girl's ability.

You mean to say that you don't like to write, or that it is difficult for you to write. Your dislike for compositions rests upon the difficulty that you find in writing them. The ease with which we accomplish anything depends largely upon our manner of doing it. Let me tell you how you may write a composition with ease and despatch.

Choose a familiar subject. Hope, Truth, Virtue, Government, Education—away with themes like these. It would "puzzle a lawyer," and a smart one, too, to write a decent essay upon these abstract themes. A descriptive subject will suit you best. Describe a school-house, a church, a dwelling-house, or any object of interest. If you are a farmer-boy, tell the uses of the various farming utensils with which you are acquainted. Name the different kinds of farm employment, and the order in which they come. If you are the son of a mechanic, tell the uses of the saw, plane, hammer, &c. If you are a little housekeeper, initiate your schoolmates into the mysteries of house-keeping. It is impossible for you to write a good composition upon a subject with which you are unacquainted. In the words of another "If there is no water in the well, you may pump forever without effect."

Again: Study your subject before attempting to write. You can do this in your walks, or while your hands are engaged in domestic employment. Ask yourself many and various questions about the subject. The answers to these questions will form your composition. For example, if you propose to write about "the horse," ask such questions as these: What is the horse? Is he one of the domestic animals? Is he ever found in the wild state? Where? Are there different species of the horse? What is

his shape? What is his size? What is his color? Is he useful to man? What are his uses? The answer to this question will form an interesting part of your composition. What are his habits? Is he easily tamed? When tame is he manageable and obedient to his owner? What is his food? To what age does he live? Is he remarkable for his intelligence? You may conclude by relating stories in regard to the intelligence or any other characteristic of the horse.

I repeat it: Study your subjects before you attempt to write. It is not strange that you find difficulty in writing when you sit down with your pen in hand, and "wait for ideas to come." Nor is it strange that you often have to wait so long.

Follow the above directions, and you will soon learn to "write a composition" with ease and despatch.

A SLEEPY PASSENGER.

Sometime ago, Monsieur M., a merchant of Leige, took passage in a railway car on the route between that city and Paris. He bought a ticket for a first-class place, and entered the train which left Leige at half-past two o'clock, P. M. He appearing to be the only person in that car, and feeling fatigued, he wrapped himself up in his cloak and stretched himself at length upon the comfortable seat for a nap, and was soon sound asleep. After some time—he did not know how long—he awoke and found that the train had stopped, and that night had now commenced to fall.

"We are at one of the stations," thought he, and lay down again. After a second nap he again awoke at a standstill.

"It seems there are a great many stopping-places on this road," said Monsieur M. Then once more stretching himself, he was soon in the arms of the drowsy god.

In the morning, the rays of the sun penetrating the car-window roused the sleeper, who, after shaking himself, rose and looked forth. The train, he supposed, had again stopped. Wishing to know how far he might be from Paris, he poked his head out of the window, and calling to a workman wearing the uniform of the railway company, asked if the train would "start soon?"

"Start!" exclaimed the workman, with a look of astonishment, "why, sir, you have got two hours to wait yet!"

"Two hours! What do you mean? Is this the sort of way the 'fast train' travels? What is the name of the station?" "Leige," replied the other.

The astonished merchant, now wide awake, sprang from the car and soon found his informant was quite correct. The conductor of the train of the previous day, having found that he had one car more than was necessary, had detached the one occupied by Monsieur M., and left it standing in the depot. Having knocked at the door, and receiving no answer from the sleeping traveller, it was naturally supposed that the car was empty.

Monsieur M., took a "fresh start" two hours afterwards, but slept no more until he arrived at Paris.

QUEER TOM.

Tom Flossofer was the queerest boy I ever knew. I don't think he ever cried. I never saw him. If Fleda found her tulips all rooted up by her pet puppy, and cried, as little girls will, "Tom was sure to come round the corner, whistling, and say:

"What makes you cry, my infant? can you cry tulips? do you think every sob makes a root or a blossom? Here! let's try to right them!"

So he would pick up the poor flowers; put their roots into the ground again, whistling all the time; make the bed look smooth and fresh, and take Fleda off to look at a pretty snake, or hunt hen's nests in the barn. Neither did he do any differently in his own troubles. One day, his great kite snapped the string, and flew away, far out of sight. Tom, stood still one moment, and then turned round to come home, whistling a merry tune.

"Why, Tom," said I, "aren't you sorry to lose that kite?"

"Yes! but what's the use? I can't take more than a minute to feel 'bad'; 'sorry' will not bring the kite back, and I want to make another."

Just so when he broke his leg.

"Poor Tom," cried Fleda, "you can't play any mo-o-o-re!"

"I'm not poor, either. You cry for me; I don't have to do it for myself, and I have a splendid time to whittle. Besides, when I get well, I shall beat every boy in school on the multiplication table: for I say it over, till it makes me sleepy, every time my leg aches!"

Tom Flossofer was queer, certainly; but I wish a great many more people were queer that way.