

terse, forbidding tones. Friendship, Gratitude, what do those things mean? What are they to do with them? and home they went, the word hanging like a big heavy weight around the little hearts. How do people write compositions? They looked at the pen then at the handle, and thought of the wily priest of whom they had read, who performed a miracle by filling his hollow cane with well-beaten egg, and then of the king who was cured of a great illness, by knocking together heavy wooden mallets filled with medicine. Could the pen-handle be hollowed and say—friendship put in? Language was there, imagination and invention too, and doubtless, some crude notions about even these abstruse topics, scattered throughout the little brains, but they had never been taught to gather these thoughts into words, and that is where the trouble lay. In rural districts the schoolboy's idea of Composition is a legendary letter handed down from father to son, back, back, to the first scribe of the family, and he takes his pen in hand to write you these few lines, hoping they may find you in good health as they leave him at present. Then, taking command of his Falstaffian recruits, his misshapen and undisciplined thoughts, dis-severs all connection between relative and antecedent, ostracises our one ewe-lamb, the possessive case, misuses his words, disuses his connectives, and with some choice rhetorical flourishes indigenous to the soil, no more at present, bad spelling and bad writing to be excused.

Our subject of Composition, in that it sets the mind looking in upon itself and brings into play the greatest number of the faculties, is of the greatest importance. It reveals the method, ordering, and extent of the child's impressions, and the whole value of the teacher's instructions; for his being able to express his thoughts in words must run parallel with his having ideas and with his knowing how to utilize these ideas. In the young mind there is, so to speak, a repulsive force strong among his various ideas and perceptions, they move too easily among each other and every little agitation of thought sets all flying about, they want the ballast of reflection, which would make each fall to its right place and come when bid. As yet they have ideas without words, words and never an idea of their meaning. Association is strong but lacks discernment, and frequently sets him out of his way, so when he tries to tell you of anything he has seen or heard, he runs from one thing to another, losing himself in the mazes of his own thoughts and totally bewildering his listeners. Frequently he is unable to abstract his ideas from the particular object or circum-