

"When I wrote that passage, God and I knew what I meant. At present, God may know, but I am sure that I don't."

The best way to begin, in writing articles, is the way that artists begin to draw. He does not at first start the cartoon of an historical picture; he draws an eye, a hand, a foot, and does it perfectly. Or he draws a tree, or a part of a house, and he practises a long time on these separate details before he ventures into more complicated combinations.

Now, a great many men and women, when beginning to write, attempt too much; they take some general subject, and flood it with platitudes and commonplaces. There is a whole class of ideas and words that go floating around the newspaper world, that belong no more to one person than another, and that by this time one person can say about as well as another; and the dishing up of any of this general good talk, while it may do very well for a letter, is not worth while in an article.

But now, to come down to a practical point. If there is a woman who could take this subject, "How to quiet a fretful baby," and write a good, sensible, shrewd article on it, though she were not literary at all, and though there might not be a fine figure in it, yet if there were a good share of practical sense and evident experience; we think her article would make a hit.

Or take this subject: "How to keep boys at home evenings."

Or, "What is the best way for a neat housekeeper and good wife to get along with a man who will smoke and chew?"

"The advantages of having boys trained to do some branches of woman's work in childhood, that may be necessary for themselves in after-life—as cooking, cleaning, and mending."

"How best to unite warmth and ventilation in a house."

"How to make Sundays both pleasant and useful to children."

These are specimens of a certain class of topics. Many others could be thought of. We mention these because they are of a homely and practical kind; but there are a thousand subjects, where a person who would follow our rule of thinking of what she wanted to say, and then saying it, might get opportunity.

The question then arises. Will writing pay? Yes, writing will pay, just as any other profession will pay, *after you have learned it*. Nobody pays to the apprentices, or raw hands in the business, what is given to those who have learned it. Young writers must begin by giving away their

writing while they are learning to write. In fact, some who are reaping large incomes now from writing began by sending articles to magazines, with no other expectation of remuneration than the insertion of them.

On this subject, we would like to relate a little story.

A colored man, who had been a slave, and escaped to Canada, was once giving it as his opinion that too much charity was given to the colored people who settled there. "They could all find work," he said.

"But," said I, "is there not a prejudice against them?"

"Certainly," he said; "but it can be overcome. I went to hire out to a farmer, but he said he didn't want me; he had all the hands he needed. I said; 'Have you any objection to my helping build stone fence with your men, if I don't charge anything for it?'"

"Why, of course not," said he.

"I took hold and worked one day at laying stone fence with his men, and after that I could always get full wages. I have never wanted for work since."

The application of this story to the case in hand is too obvious to need comment.

—*Hearth and Home*.

## JOHN CLARE, THE PEASANT POET OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

BY JANUARY SEARLE.

We want a new Plutarch to give us the biographical portraits of the minor poets, both of England and America, who have lived during the past half century. There are numerous facts concerning them which could now be very easily collected and put into durable form, but which will soon have vanished out of all human memory, and thus be lost to literature for ever, unless some lover of poets and poetry comes quickly to the rescue. This work should be done in all cases where it is possible by some one who is personally acquainted with the biographical subject. Nor can all the genius and skill of the most accomplished writer make up for the absence of this important qualification. A single touch of the living fire of sympathy put into the picture will often do more for its vitality and truthfulness than all the mastery of art without it.

Among the minor bards of England whose names are familiar to all readers of poetry, is John Clare, the Northamptonshire poet, who