

competent accessible Mentor, to have their doubt resolved. Then they must rewrite their draft and view it from every possible standpoint—spelling, punctuation, capitals, paragraphing, expression.

To secure this preliminary study is the all-important thing. It is also, for obvious reasons, important that the class shall not bring you, as a final exercise, the result of this home polishing. They must store in their minds, at least for a season, the results of their meditation, their research, their consultation of friends.

When the hour comes for school exercise, give each pupil a half sheet of the proper paper. This paper should not be of too cheap a sort, and the ruling should be wide. You are to read this mass of manuscript, and you must use every precaution against spattering of ink and crowding of words. Liberal spacing of the lines conduces greatly to ease in reading. A good paper also helps in the same direction. The class should now feel, after all this preparation, that something important impends. Do not let them drop from this wholesome state of mind into baneful indifference. You set them writing by your watch, and you see to it that no pupil can possibly practise the dishonesty of using the home draft from which to copy. Each writes from the prepared state of mind which your directions should have secured. When the time is up, all must stop writing unless they are in the midst of a sentence. You give five minutes more for revision of the work and for finishing the last sentence.

These papers are very short. The teacher can read them rapidly without omitting any points. The best ones are read as easily and quickly as so much print. The inferior ones need more time. Comment on the faulty papers the next day in the class, without naming the derelict individuals.

Praise the good papers, and privately tell the writers of the bad ones that their turn will come yet. Of course the sceptical old teacher will smile at the idea of giving to pupils such minute directions as to what to do at home, as if there were any assurance that they would do it. But several considerations will soon be found that will weigh with the pupil to make him do what he is asked. If he does his writing in the class sufficiently well, no question will of course arise. If he still does poor work, the presumption is that he has neglected his preparation, and in this case he may be required to bring his home drafts, that you may see that he has made them. He will surely be left in the rear if he does not do it, and will soon find this out if the teacher is in earnest.

The procedures above described give the pupil all possible opportunity to write correct English, and require him to carry his points in his memory for a season. The chances for avoiding every possible error of the grosser sort, as in spelling, are so lavishly given, that it becomes right to announce any such blunder as fatal to the acceptableness of the exercise. Whatever means the custom of the school suggests should be supplied to stigmatize, in the given circumstances, such an exercise as a failure. It will not do to dally with the assumed natural deficiency of any individual in this particular.

Naturally, every one who wields the pen is liable to slip and lapse, however much he knows. But it surpasses belief that any intelligent user of the pen should be unable to detect his own casual errors, full opportunity being given for revision and correction. Pupils should be allowed to insert omitted letters and words by means of the caret, and to strike out chance excrescences by neat lines drawn through the superfluous parts. They had better not scratch their