

tion is not "are they worthy of praise?" but "are they liberal supporters of the press?" Are matters relating to religion, education, science, or social economy to be discussed, the question is not what are the real merits, but to what extent will the peculiar views and opinions of the proprietors be advanced or retarded. With what pleasure, as a rule, do we turn from the best of our own publications to such periodicals as *Chambers' Journal*, the *Illustrated London News*, and other carefully written and discreetly edited English newspapers and serials, and feel that we are reading *facts*. Nor is carelessness much less mischievous than wanton malice. In the summary of news known as editors' notes, in which lengthy articles are supposed to be boiled down, how seldom do we find the facts accurately stated, when we know enough of the matter to form an unbiased opinion? With what satisfaction a man, who both by precept and practice encourages the use of simple language, when he has reluctantly and under necessity used such words as "catalectic" and "hypermeterical," finds himself credited with using "hypercatalectic!"

To have a thorough command of language requires extensive reading and close study, but for ordinary purposes, as Benjamin Franklin says, "want of care does more harm than want of knowledge." The same idea may sometimes be expressed in different ways, but generally speaking, every change of words produces a corresponding modification of meaning. For instance, some words are relatively strong or weak, others are of general or particular meaning, while others again are common and familiar, or choice, but less easily understood. The employment of the best word in every case is the highest aim of composition.

In teaching composition we have

carefully to distinguish between the ideas and the words employed to express those ideas. We have also to attend to the form when the composition is written. In the form, I include the place of commencing the lines and paragraphs, the size of the writing, the spaces between the words; the division of words when necessary, punctuation, and the use of capital letters. If the first lessons in dictation have been properly taught, the teacher will have very little trouble with these matters; but if dictation has been employed merely as an exercise in spelling, he will meet with difficulties which might have been avoided.

The practice of requiring scholars to say *capital* whenever they spell a proper noun, I have always regarded as a waste of time. The natural inference would be that words not so spelt should be commenced with a small letter, but such is not the case. The words "and" and "the" are often written with capitals, but you do not spell them *so* orally. North, South, Pacific, Teacher, and Trustee, are spelt both with and without capitals, but spelling London capital L-o-n-d-o-n will not help the scholar in the proper way to write those words. In most schools transcription, that is copying from the Reading-books, is employed in the junior classes, and dictation, as the pupils advance. If pupils are required to make capitals whenever they occur in the books, they will form habits which will be of more use to them than all the rules, and will cover most cases instead of providing for the easiest only, leaving the most difficult unthought of.

Punctuation should be taught with dictation. Let the pupils put in the stops, using their own judgment, and compare with the book afterwards. When they can punctuate other people's writing, they will have no trouble with their own.