

word from another, they must fail, if left entirely to themselves, to pronounce them in groups. It is probably because that it is natural, and very probably also from supposing that there will be time enough to remedy it as they advance, that the junior classes are so much neglected in this respect. But let those teachers who act thus remember that they are not only neglecting the duties they have undertaken to discharge, but they are laying up for themselves a mass of trouble from which they can scarcely ever afterwards free themselves. As Mr. Sheridan says: "The habits the pupils acquire while learning the First Book accompany them into the higher classes, and once contracted are never thoroughly cured."

NEGLECTED EVEN IN THE SENIOR CLASSES.—But even in the senior classes it is too frequently quite neglected, notwithstanding that it does more to destroy the perspicuity of the language, and mar the reading, than any other. In some cases, indeed, the disagreeable effects of erroneous grouping force themselves too strongly upon the teacher's attention to permit him to overlook them altogether, but the remedies applied convince one that the true cause is unknown. The child is told "to read more quickly" or "more slowly," or to "mind the stops;" but in the majority of cases, when these instructions are given, the defect is not so much in the slowness or rapidity of utterance, or in neglect of the printed pauses, as in that wrong collocation of words of which I am now speaking.

Take, for instance, the following:—

"With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel."

A slow and hesitating reader would group the words somewhat thus:—

"With one—knee on—the grass—did the little—maiden—kneel."

While a quick, but inexperienced reader, would on the other hand join them something like this:—

"With one knee on the grass did the little—maiden kneel."

In such cases it is clear that the defects are neither slowness nor quickness, for, in the one, the reading may be made quicker, and, in the other, much slower, without becoming more correct, or more pleasing. Neither will the command to "mind the stops" be of any advantage, for there happens to be no stop in the line at all.

"TRY AGAIN."—Sometimes the child is told to "try again," and, probably, after another failure he may be required to make a second, or even a third effort; but to tell a child to read any passage in which he has signally failed, without showing him in what his errors consisted, or affording him a means for correcting them, is like telling him to work an arithmetical question for whose solution he has not yet seen any established guide. Mr. Fussell says: "Few things are more painful to me than to see the energies of a young teacher frittered away after this fashion. A child reads a sentence—he commits gross faults. 'Read it again,' says the teacher. He reads it again, and, as might be expected, he reads it very much as at first. 'Read it again,' says the teacher; and so on. It does not seem to enter into the teacher's conception that his own labours, and the child's too, would be immensely lightened if he would but tell the child what his faults are, and *why* he was to read it again."

ONLY TRUE PLAN IS THE APPLICATION OF THE RULE OF IMITATION.—The only true remedy for this defect is in the application of the rule of which I am now treating—reading the sentence as it ought to be read, so that the child may possess something tangible, by means of which he may discover and correct his errors. Without this, the commands, "mind your stops," "read slower," or "quicker," &c., will be valueless; and "to try again," may, indeed, produce a difference, but it can only by accident produce correctness.

FAULTS IN APPLYING THE RULE TO THE LOWEST CLASS.—There is little difficulty in applying this rule to the senior classes, but in its application to the lowest class I find that teachers commit two faults: (1) In their anxiety to make the pupils join the words together they permit them to read very rapidly, and without any pause until the end of each small sentence, thus making, in fact, one group out of what ought to have been several; (2) or they make the pauses too long and too marked. Thus they either read the sentence, "Lie thee home from school," as if in one breath, or else they make as long a stop after the word "home" as if the sense was completed there.

REMEDY FOR ROTE READING.—I find also that the pupils get the sentences by rote, and repeat them without looking at the words. To remedy this, they should be called upon first to name single words selected at random through the lesson, and when they can do so rapidly and correctly they should then be taught to read in groups as explained. In some schools tablets are used from which to teach this class. In such cases the pointer should be used with judgment, for I find that a good deal of the disconnected reading in the lowest classes is owing to the way in which this instrument is handled. The master points to one word after another, and, as a consequence, the child, in following the master, pauses equally after each.

HOW TO USE THE POINTER.—Instead of this, the pointer should merely indicate the sentence to be read, or, what I have sometimes seen tried with advantage, it should be made to pass rapidly over the words which form a group, stopping after each group so

long as the master thinks correct. Thus, with the sentence, "Lie thee home from school," the teacher may either say, "Read that," or he may pass the pointer over the words "Lie thee home," pausing a little after "home," and then passing it over the remainder. Thus he indicates each group, each pause, and its exact duration.

SPECIAL FAULTS MAY REQUIRE SPECIAL REMEDIES.—By a careful adherence to the rule of imitation the children will very soon pick up the general features of the master's style, and, in many cases, also, even its minute characteristics, but there still may remain special faults which can be removed more quickly by some special additional remedies.

INDISTINCTNESS IS A FAULT OF THIS KIND.—Indistinctness is a fault of this kind, and requires careful attention not only from its producing bad reading, but from its destroying to a considerable extent the good effects expected from draft teaching. Every child when reading is supposed to be conveying instruction to his class-fellows, and when answering he is contributing to the common fund of information; but it is clear, that when his utterance is indistinct—when he is not clearly heard—time is wasted, and an amount of knowledge lost.

INAUDIBLE SPEAKING, ONE CAUSE OF.—Pupils are inaudible very frequently from being permitted to stand with their heads down, with their chests cramped, and in other attitudes in which to speak clearly is almost an impossibility. Unless the organs of speech have fair play, unless the body is erect and firm, not only will the child always speak at a disadvantage, but his mind itself will grow languid and listless. He should keep his head well up, his chin and breast well forward; he should stand firmly and uprightly, and hold the book so as not to stop the flow of sound. If held before the mouth, as it sometimes is, the voice is checked considerably.

ANOTHER CAUSE.—Sometimes, however, pupils are inaudible simply from carelessness and from bad habits early contracted. In such cases it is more difficult to effect a cure. The best remedy I have met with—one, indeed, that I have scarcely ever known to fail when intelligently applied—is to place the child at a considerable distance from the teacher, generally at the opposite end of the room, and to encourage him to pitch his voice so as to be heard from there. In such a case nature assists the child in acquiring the true pitch, and by a little care and exactness on the teacher's part, the child will soon succeed in making himself clearly heard. He should then return to his class, and be called upon to read *with the same tone that he made use of when at a distance*. In his efforts to do this he almost invariably succeeds in adopting the very tone he ought to make use of in his class, for a consciousness of the change of position tempers down the high tone to the true standard.

REMEDY WHEN INDISTINCTNESS IS CAUSED BY SLOVENLY HABITS.—Indistinctness, however, may proceed from muttering or mumbling the words, from slurring over their final syllables or letters, or from running one word into another, as, for example, "he fired with so sure an aim," may be read as if it were "he fired with so sure a name." When it is thus the result of slovenliness of speech, a different remedy should be applied. The master should read very slowly for their imitation, making them read very slowly also, sounding each word clearly and by itself, but paying most attention to the ending syllables of each. A little practice in this way will produce clearness and distinctness, but accompanied with a considerable amount of disconnectedness. Ease and fluency must be afterwards acquired by the proper methods.

IRREGULARITIES OF TONE ARE ALSO SPECIAL FAULTS.—Irregularity of tone is another of these special faults. When the tone is "irregular," it may be either too high or too low, or, if in the natural or speaking key, it may be dull and monotonous. It may also be accompanied with a kind of cadence or intonation, giving to the reading a character between speaking and singing. This is produced by either abruptly stopping at the commas, or else by raising and prolonging the voice at them. To encourage the child to catch the tone in which the master himself reads is one remedy for this fault. The child's expertness in picking up this tone depends very much upon whether his ear is naturally sensitive or not. If he have a good musical ear he will have but little difficulty.

BEST REMEDY FOR THIS FAULT.—The best plan, however, is to make him speak the words, as he would in conversation, without looking at the book. For this purpose the general meaning of the passage should be explained to him, he should commit the words correctly to memory, and he should be called upon to repeat them to the teacher—or, better, to one of his class-fellows. In verbatim doing this he will almost insensibly adopt the natural or speaking tone. When he has done so, permit him to use the book, and the defects will gradually disappear. In most cases, indeed, at first the tone, when using the book, will differ from that when the book is closed; but this difference will diminish with every trial, until at last it will become almost imperceptible.

If familiar sentences were used in the first case—such, for instance, as the ordinary forms of salutation, the school rules, sentences about the weather, &c., which the child is in the habit of using himself, or of hearing others use—his attention could be more forcibly drawn to the difference between his manner of speaking and reading. But, whatever sentences are used, he will,