

READING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES.

Train a child to grasp with the eye but one word or syllable at a time and to speak each one before the eye passes to the next, and you make him first a drawling reader. Then as he attains facility and speed in word-calling his reading may be rapid, but it becomes as expressionless as the ticking of a watch. To read with that continuity of utterance which the expression of coherent thought requires, the eye must run ahead of the voice. To this end the words must be grasped not singly but in groups.

A few devices for eye-training are here given:

(1) In that early stage when the child does not readily recognize even single words, write words on separate cards, shuffle the cards, and turn them up one after another, the children calling the words at sight.

(2) For drill in quick recognition, write on the board the few words which have been learned, together with some not yet learned, and from day to day change the order in which they are written. This precaution will keep the child from depending on the position the word occupies instead of its form. The greatest weakness of a reading chart is at this point.

(3) Occasionally have rapid drills in calling words running down the middle of a page and back again. Let a pupil speak a word near the middle of the top line, then the word directly under it and so on down rapidly, all the other members of the class to be ready to "go on" the moment such direction is given. Promptness and rapidity are essential to success in working this device.

(4) Cut slips from printed matter of a grade somewhat higher than that used by the pupils at the time. Distribute these for silent work, requiring each to underline all the words which he knows. This exercise has also a moral or ethical value. It is worth while to bring the child to the fork in the road where he must say "I know" or "I don't know." Such tests cultivate a habit of intellectual honesty and of sharp discrimination between what is unknown and what is not known. We sometimes find adults, even teachers, lacking the courage to say "I don't know." Pat crushed the snake's head, but the tail kept wiggling. "Sure, it must be dead but it's not conscious of the fact!" Many

a person is ignorant but not conscious of the fact, and unwilling to admit it when made conscious of his lack of knowledge. There is sound philosophy in the Persian proverb which says: *To know that we know that which we know and to know that we do not know that which we do not know—that is true knowledge.*

(5) Let pupils hold their books closed but in position to open them quickly. At a signal, the books are opened at random. Another signal follows almost immediately and the books are closed. Each pupil now repeats as many words as he was able to grasp in the moment allowed for looking.

(6) In class work disregard the paragraph numbers. There is no good reason why paragraphs in a reader should be numbered, and in readers recently published the numbers are left out. The changes from one pupil to another in a reading recitation should be made elsewhere than at the end of paragraphs. If John knows that he may be called on at the end of any sentence to read on, he must follow the one reading, and thus get eye training. If he knows that no change will be expected until the end of a paragraph is reached, he is not likely to follow with his eye.

(7) For drill, write stories on the board broken up into separate clauses or phrases each occupying a line, thus:

One day,
a little boy
said to his mother
where is my hat?
His mother answered
I know where my hat is.

The words in each line should be read continuously as one single expression, not as so many separate words. Great facility can be acquired by a little practice of this kind. It is said that Lord Macaulay had such a degree of eye-training in the art of silent reading that his visual movement in reading a page of ordinary width was continuous down the page, not back and forth across it. It is not uncommon for readers in newspaper offices to read columns of the usual width in this way.

(8) After a lesson is read, call for a re-reading by parts, thus:

Mary may read where it says the lion roared