

as it is to be found in books and papers. That individual is poorly prepared for life who has not been taught to enjoy the great pleasure of perusing the thoughts of others. Reading should not stop when the school life is ended, nor when one settles down into a home and business of his own. All should read, not anything and everything, but should be taught to read in a systematic way. Thus will they round out their intellectual talents in all directions, and verify the truth long ago stated by Bacon, that "Reading maketh a full man."

T. W. FIELDS, in *Indiana School Journal*.

A LANGUAGE LESSON.

Unbounded as is the influence of the teacher, for good or ill, in no direction is it more potent than in the matter of language. Children are close imitators. The teacher's language is adopted unconsciously, whether it be pure, or blemished by inaccuracies. We all know how easily one falls into incorrect habits of speech, and catches expressions which, if not positive slang, are, at least, "more striking than classic." We imitate the tones and tricks of speech of those with whom we are most intimate, to such an extent that those who know both parties recognize the adopted tone, and immediately attribute it to its proper source.

It is through this tendency to imitation, that the teacher may hope to affect the language of her pupils, as well as by personal effort for that end. But is her language worthy of imitation? Is it grammatically correct, pure, simple truthful? One has only to listen to the conversation at any teachers' gathering, to be convinced of the fact that the teacher is not always a model of accuracy.

Perhaps, young teacher, your attention has not been called to your own defects. Watch yourself carefully through one entire day, and you will be startled at the revelation. You may not be guilty of "aint"; of "I done it," for "I did it"; of "When I come to school this morning," for "When I came," etc. Are you equally free from, "He don't (do not) pay attention to his work," "intended to have written," "I am going to go to the lecture," "Each pupil may take their slate," and the like?

Endeavor to correct all these errors, and you will realize how hard it is to overcome the habits of a life time. Is it not a dreary thought that, with extremely rare exceptions, human beings are surrounded in childhood by those whose speech is inaccurate? Thus from our very births we form wrong habits that only the most persistent effort can correct. And here we find a strong argument for accuracy on the part of the teacher, as well as for the correction of pupils' errors by the teacher, before bad habits are strengthened by years of indulgence therein.

Do not be discouraged if you do not at once succeed in revising your methods of speech. Take one error at a time. Cultivate the habit of criticising the language of others, not uncharitably, but to render the ear sensitive to errors. When one's ear is quick to detect flaws in the conversation of others, it will reveal equally as well one's own imperfections. This point reached, we have good reason to be hopeful.

Is your language pure? Do you, of several expressions, choose that which is the most refined? Be on your guard against the use of slang. To young children there is something attractive in a free off-hand style of conversation; but do not let the freedom degenerate into coarseness. There are many expressions which began existence as unmitigated slang. Adopted here and there by members of a class higher than that with which they originated, they have at last come to be regarded as fairly respectable English. Shun them. Be as exclusive as you will in the domain of language.

Let your language be simple and concise; free from that superfluous use of adjectives which leaves one at a loss for words to describe objects occasioning emotions of grandeur, sublimity, and beauty, because "awful," "magnificent," "grand," "sublime," "perfectly lovely," are used so commonly as to have lost their meaning.

Be true. Perfect truthfulness of character will reveal itself in truthful language. The habit of exaggerated utterance is so universal that a person whose language is exactly suited to the thought to be expressed is indeed rare. Let your conversation be so simply true, so free from exaggeration that your pupils will say of you, "Teacher never says anything she does not mean."

Does it seem a trivial matter to give one's attention to deciding whether a dress is indeed "perfectly lovely," or only "very beautiful"? "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." Remember that years of faithfulness to duty, even as a child, bring their reward in the crises of our lives. When the heart is torn with anguish, and the mind is shrouded in darkness; when on the pathway before us no light is thrown, and we are tossed about in dread and uncertainty; then Duty, who may have been the "stern lawgiver" of former years, assumes "the Godhead's most benignant grace"; and, giving back to us the strength that is born of long obedience, holds us firmly by the hand and leads us again "beside the still waters."

Our language has been made what it is to-day by the accumulated additions of successive generations. What service shall our generation render? In the future years will the student of language find in the language of this period a high-toned national life? In nothing is the life of a nation more plainly revealed than in its language. Remember, and we cannot emphasize this point too strongly, that the nation is but the "general average" of the individuals composing it,—whether in language, manners, or morals. It is only as each individual becomes conscious of his duty, and seeks a higher plain of personal attainment, that there can be any national aspiration toward higher things. Ponder upon this, young teacher. Let the thought stay by you until it becomes a part of your mental possessions. Nay, more, until it shall become a ruling motive of your life, and is incorporated into your character that fine patriotism that leads one to make of himself all that he can, for his country's sake.

By Ida M. Gardner, in the *Primary Teacher*.

SCRIPT FIRST—THEN PRINT.

A teacher asks, "Why printing on slates should not be taught to small children since that is the form which is first put before them." The child should be taught to read script first from the black-board, and he should begin immediately to copy the words on his slate. One reason for copying is, that there are no books or charts, which contain repetition enough to familiarize the child properly with the words.

By teaching the script first in this way the child learns the print form to be the reading form. He makes the transition without difficulty. If you teach print first on the other hand, it seems almost like a new language to learn the script. This method has been tried a great many times and all who try it say that script should come first. One of my classes is composed of children who knew nothing whatever of reading script first. I taught them script from the board, taking words I knew they would need when they were ready for the chart. When these words were familiar, I turned to the chart, and found they read them with perfect ease. The error in this way of teaching reading is, that those who try it do not present the words to the child sufficiently in script before turning to print.—*V in New York School Journal*.