

the child is too often taken through the routine of a reading lesson, without an effort being made to rouse any interest in the meaning of what is read. The teacher is content if the mechanical process of uttering the word is well done, without ever thinking of ascertaining whether the child's mind is actively engaged on the matter he is reading or not. It would be well if many followed Philip's example with the cunuch. There was in an English school a class that made very slow progress in learning to read. They were made to go faithfully through the allotted reading lesson every day, but the teacher felt it more important to see that every child read than to see that he understood what he read. A new teacher took charge of the class, and at once set about awakening interest in the lesson by a series of well-put questions. In a very short time there was perceptible improvement, not only in the reading of the class, but in the mental activity of the scholars. In the present day our educational authorities have directed more attention to this subject, but characteristically enough, their efforts have aimed rather at improving the mechanical rendering of a reading lesson, than enabling the mind to absorb the meaning of what is being read. But is not this like making clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, and neglecting the inside? It is very questionable whether one in a hundred will ever be benefited, commensurately with the efforts expended, to render sentences with elocutionary effect. And this is now insisted on to the neglect of that invaluable habit of grasping with facility the meaning of what is read. It may be urged, that the teaching of elocution cannot be done, unless this habit has been formed; but this is a fallacy, as every teacher of any experience knows. How often, for instance, is a scholar found who can read admirably an ordinary sentence, and yet when called upon cannot explain a word of it. When Bacon says that "reading maketh a full man," he estimates it as a means of mental, not of voice or chest, culture.

The day is well-nigh past when that time-honoured system of cramming by means of

the spelling-book and dictionary was in high favour. It must be admitted that there are many words in our language that a child can only learn to spell as he learns the multiplication table, but that teacher who can wisely direct special attention to these, to the exclusion of thousands that can be learnt best in connection with ordinary reading lessons, shews the highest skill. The teaching of writing is not free from our besetting sin. Many children are taught to write without the slightest effort being made to give them intelligent ideas of the shape of the letters, of their relative sizes, of the way of joining them, and of the neatness not to say artistic finish, that may be shewn even in plain writing. It is to be feared that the introduction of copy-books with headlines has not been an unmixed benefit. The teacher who is freed from the responsibility of "setting copies," is liable too often to neglect to explain those that are set. It might be well to have a copy at the head of each alternate page only, and have the other page left for the teacher to practise his scholars upon work that may be necessary to correct faults that have appeared in the previous copies.

When we speak of arithmetic, the chief phase of cramming that looms up, and enlarges the more steadfastly we gaze upon it, is the nonsensical habit of teaching by rule. A boy once applied for admission to a Collegiate Institute, and was given a question in arithmetic to work, to which he failed to get a correct answer. The teacher asked him how he did it, and he gave the rule; said the teacher, "we do it by the rule of common sense;" the boy replied, "I never learnt that rule." There are vast numbers who, like this boy, are accustomed to work everything by book rule, instead of by that of common sense. We know a teacher of high standing, who, when a question of any difficulty is given, requires a statement of the rule that has been used to solve it. After the first four rules have been taught, that teacher is the wisest who assists the scholars to find out rules for themselves, and formulates them as soon as clear ideas have been obtained. In many cases, rules, like definitions,