

cases as you cite do not bear out your statement that in many instances they have used concrete numbers for multipliers, as 8×10 cents must read 8 times 10 cents.

I have heard that the Public School Board of Boston has adopted an entirely new school programme. Please state the changes made.

The programme is "new" to Boston; but programmes based on similar principles have been adopted before in other cities, in Europe and America. Henceforth in the primary schools instruction is to be almost entirely oral. Pupils will learn from objects and from the teacher instead of books. An exercise known as "Language" will consist of oral lessons upon pictures, plants, animals and what else the teacher may consider useful in leading pupils to express what they know in words. Oral instruction will also be given upon form, color, measures, animals grouped by habits, vegetables, minerals, hygiene and the human body. The metric system will be taught from the metric apparatus. No spelling books will be used at all, the reading books taking their place. In the higher grades the study of grammar, as generally studied, has been abolished with the spelling book. In the stead of parsing and other technical work, lessons will be given in composition, in the use of capitals, in letter writing and in the arrangement of sentences. This is the change most needed in Canada. It is time at least that we taught grammar with the view of enabling pupils to "speak and write the English language correctly," which is our professed object. Much of the time formerly devoted to geography will be given to natural philosophy and physiology.

FEATURES OF APPLETON'S NEW "READERS."

General Method. The system adopted may be called eclectic. It is a combination of the "word" and "phonic" methods, with a larger share of the latter. The first three lessons in the primer are taught *by sight* only, and consist simply of words and phrases. The fourth lesson is divided into two parts, "finding sounds" and "making a word." So through the primer *sight* and *sound* go hand in hand in enabling the pupil to learn to read in the shortest and simplest possible way.

Grouping Phrases. Every teacher who has taught primary classes knows the evils which arise from allowing children to "sing" their words separately. They naturally give as much emphasis to *a*, *the*, *of*, *in*, etc., as to larger words, and pause as long after them. This does more to give them an unnatural method of reading than any other single cause. It takes years of careful effort on the part of good teachers in the higher grades to undo the evil done in this one way by the careless primary teacher. But the most careful teachers of the junior classes using tablets, or books printed in the usual way, have found it to be a most difficult task to teach their pupils to *group* words in reading them; to say, "on the road," for instance, as one word instead of three independent words. The authors of these Readers have, in the first part of their primer, grouped in a simple manner phrases which should be "run together" in speaking. Such combinations of words as "a hat," "in her hand," "my red dress," are enclosed by lines thus: | a hat |; | in her hand |; | my red dress |. Would it not be well for teachers of primary grades to mark their tablets in a similar manner, with ink and a brush pencil, or with a crayon pencil? If the first twenty tablets were so marked it would be a great benefit to both teachers and pupils.

Finding Sounds. This exercise commences the fourth lesson given to a child. The word "rat" has already been presented to him, and he can name it *by sight*. He finds the fourth lesson printed thus:

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1.          RAT
2.          R — A — T
3.          R — — A — — T
4.    R          A          T

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The word "rat" is first sounded in the proper manner. The teacher then asks his pupils to listen carefully while he *sounds* the same word *slowly*, as represented by line two. After *sounding* (not *spelling*) it slowly two or three times, the pupils imitate him, until they all do it correctly. He then sounds the word and separates the *sounds* (not *letters*) still more, as in line three. The class follow him. When he has reached line four the *sounds* are so widely separated as to be quite independent of each other. The pupils will thus readily learn that what seemed to them to be one sound is really made up of three distinct *sounds*, each sound represented by a certain mark or letter. They should not yet know the names of these letters.

Making a Word. This exercise is exactly the reverse of the last, and forms part of the same lesson. The word is printed in parts first, which are gradually sounded more nearly together until they are combined in the one sound "rat." The exercise is indicated thus:

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          R          A          T
          R — — A — — T
          R — A — T
          RAT

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The *sounds* in line one should be separated entirely, that is, the sound of *r* should cease altogether before the sound of *a* begins, &c. In the other lines this should not be done. The sound of one letter should be continued until the sound of the next commences. They should be drawn out and attached to each other, so as to form a word spoken in a drawling manner. Then by gradually reducing the space between the sounds the word "rat" is at length formed, when the sounds are brought together so closely, that the distance between them cannot be further reduced.

Naming the Letters. The alphabet, as a whole, comes on the last page of the primer, instead of the first. It has, however, been presented to the pupil in parts before he reaches the end of his first book. Three or four letters are presented to him occasionally to be *named*, not *sounded*. These three or four are, of course, the letters that he has previously been sounding. Thus, the learning of the alphabet in the old sense is sandwiched in as a "side issue," having no direct bearing on teaching reading. The large and small forms are presented for *naming* at the same time.

Language Lessons. The authors urge upon teachers the importance of giving what may be termed "oral language lessons," in connection with the reading lessons. What a small opportunity a child usually has of speaking to its teacher in school? If a child converses daily with correct speaking parents at home, it becomes an accurate speaker, and grammar lessons are, to a considerable extent, superfluous as far as it is concerned. It is not enough that it should *hear* its parents talk correctly. It must itself talk with them, and have its little errors promptly and kindly corrected. The teacher ought to take the place of the intelligent and correct-speaking parent, in this respect, for every child in his school. By the child should talk freely and frequently with the teacher. He should express his own thoughts in his own language; and this will afford his teacher an opportunity of correcting his errors of language and style. For this reason the authors recommend that the children be led to talk about the things and scenes represented in the beautiful pictures with which the Readers are illustrated. They are not to do this, as some seem to think, merely that they may be interested in what they read, but chiefly as a "language lesson." The importance of such an exercise before a