

ciple of vocal delivery is simple: as the breath is expelled for the creation of sound the vocal organs should act instantly and with proportionate force on the expulsive action of the lungs. If the breath be driven out with great force and the action of the vocal organs be languid, then the trachea is impelled upwards and ultimate disease follows. Thus the two efforts of breathing for sound and vocal action should be simultaneous and equal in force. Finally, with reference to the material functions of good reading, the pupils should be instructed to breathe regularly and systematically. To read until we are "out of breath," is the common habit. But the practical elocutionist, who never suffers from throat disease nor in voice power, breathes gently and regularly at every pause. He never gasps or appears exhausted, because he is never out of breath. Let the rule then be enforced to breathe at every pause; and when I have explained the laws of pausing, it will be seen how often the opportunities for breathing occur.

Let us next consider the higher qualities of vocal delivery,—of reading as an art, founded upon the principles of a true science. Reading is not as some have asserted an imitative art, in the sense of copying the specialties and peculiarities of a popular representative of the art. It is not in fact imitation in any sense; for he who reads well does not assume a passion or imitate a manner, but becomes that which he utters; makes it for the time being his own thought and feeling, and delivers it with all the force and truthfulness of nature. There must be genuine feeling prevailing the expression, and that feeling can only be realized by a clear understanding and thorough conception of the passage to be read. The great neglect of reading as an art no doubt makes this power of conception, the faculty of instantly realizing to our own minds, whatever genius and zeal has produced in other minds, a rare faculty.

But he who aims at the highest excellencies of the art, who studies to understand and to realize what he reads, and to interpret its sense and sentiment in bodily forms is cultivating and developing the conceptive faculty; and may in time attain such command over his imagination as is necessary for the highest excellencies of expressive reading. Hence the method of the teacher. He must make his pupils understand the exact matter of the lesson, the drift of the argument, the plot or character of the poem or dramatic extract. An accomplished reader will often make his own reading of a passage an admirable interpretation of it. In selections of a high order, however, such as Horatius, or the Charge of the Light Brigade or Parhassius, or the trial scene, the story of the poem and a description of the characters ought in all cases to precede the reading. But the same principle should guide the teacher who has charge of the second or third books. Whenever a fine poem—and its simplicity or appropriateness for childhood will not affect its beauty—has to be read, the true nature of the sentiment and all the points of beauty in it, ought to be explained, both that the pupil may have imagination exercised and interest aroused.

The rules of elocution are very numerous; but the principles which suggest them are few and simple. These rules are good for reference and authority; but the accomplished reader never thinks of his "rules." He studies the sentiment or thought which he has to read, the tenor and resolution of one thought to another, or the nature of the sentiment, and the forms of expression and their logical relation or bearing; and then he reads in harmony with the unvarying principles which I now proceed to explain.

*Time.* When once children can read with facility they read too fast. They pay little regard to the grammatical punctuation, and none to the rhetorical pauses dependent on the logical relations of the sentence. Relief from the struggles with a hard word