

be lying in wait for provincialisms," and by their captious manner, and their constant fault-finding, they worry and distract their children until they force them to commit, in their perplexity, errors which they otherwise might have escaped.

**BEST PLACE TO ATTEND TO MAL-PRONUNCIATIONS.**—Errors of pronunciation consist chiefly of provincialisms and local peculiarities, and can, therefore, be best checked in that conversational intercourse which always exists between the teacher and children during school hours. They are reducible, as Dr. Woodford remarks, to a few great heads, and therefore it is obvious that a short column of words and a few simple expressions might be selected to represent the whole, which, being carefully and repeatedly pronounced every morning, or as occasion may suggest, would serve for their correction.

**DEFECTS IN READING ARE ALMOST UNIVERSAL.**—The defects which I do retain under the head of bad reading are, I regret to say, almost universally met with, notwithstanding the improvement that must have taken place within the last twenty years in the education of the people of Great Britain and Ireland. Inspectors and other educational authorities continually refer to them. The Rev. Mr. Cook says, "The reading is hasty, monotonous, and unintelligible." Mr. Moseley "is not aware that in any school is attention given to just expression or correct emphasis." Mr. Thurtell: "It is in general extremely monotonous." Mr. Alderson: "I have found, in the course of my inspection, nothing more annoying than the indistinct mumbling which in many schools passes current for reading." Mr. Brodie: "By great courtesy only and forbearing allowance can that inaudible sound, which, because a pupil is standing with a book in his hands and his lips are doubtfully moving, you hope to hear, but might as easily hope to see, be called reading. Occasionally, but rarely, the other extreme prevails, and the whole class shrieks. Stops are disregarded, and the reader speedily sits down, or, if a female, droops into her place, with a serene indifference to the last words of the sentence, joyous anyhow to have rushed through the small portion of an ungenial task." While in his report for the next year he adds, "There is imperfect enunciation and articulation, slurring over of final letters and syllables, little attention to stops, unheeded emphasis, mumbling, inaudibility." Mr. Wilkinson, in the same year, corroborates this statement. He says: "During the past year I have frequently had to complain of the inaudible mumbling, particularly among the lower classes of my schools, which frequently passes current for reading." Again, in Ireland, Mr. Sheridan, Head Inspector, reports that—"Almost universally the practice is to accustom the small children to utter the words *one by one*, and in the same tone throughout, which is always several degrees higher than the natural or speaking tone."

My own experience as an inspector is in accordance with the statements of these gentlemen. I have found that even with the most advanced children the tone is monotonous, unnaturally high, and, generally, so unlike the tone in which they speak, that, when a child ceases to read and begins to enter into conversation, so great a difference is manifested, that one might suppose he was listening to different persons.

**REASONS ASSIGNED BY THE INSPECTORS IN IRELAND.**—Many different reasons have been assigned for the prevalence of these defects. In Ireland, the inspectors attribute their existence to "the infrequency of teaching reading," "to its not being taught as a distinct lesson," "to the neglect of it in favour of geometry, mensuration, &c.," "to the habit which most teachers have of interrupting the children to correct errors of pronunciation, or to ask questions on the subject-matter of the lesson, or to require the derivation or meaning of some word;" to the fact that "the monotonous pronunciation of the words incidental to the early attempts at reading are not diligently removed as the pupils gain fluency."

**CAUSES ASSIGNED BY THE INSPECTORS IN ENGLAND.**—In Great Britain, the causes assigned, in addition to the above, are: (1) Teachers' unwillingness to engage in the mechanical work of the school; (2) Pupils and teachers are too easily satisfied; (3) Shape of class; (4) Pupils do not read enough, owing to the size of class, and time spent in questioning, spelling, meanings, taking places, &c.; (5) Masters not conscious of the necessity which exists for applying special remedies; (6) Too much noise in schools; (7) Reading sentence by sentence, in order of position, and others too numerous to mention here.

**THESE CAUSES CAN BE TRACED TO TEACHERS' NEGLIGENCE.**—These causes may, I regret to say, be fairly attributed to some fault in the teaching body. There is scarcely any subject which requires more earnest care, constant labour, and never-failing patience, on the part of the teacher, than reading; but there is no subject on which, in my opinion, a conscientious master should produce a more marked effect, as it is brought almost continually under his notice from the first day of the child's school life until its close.

**I. RULES TO PRODUCE GOOD READING.**—The following rules for teaching reading are chiefly drawn from my own experience. They are easy of application, and in the majority of cases they have proved effectual. I have arranged them, so far as they will admit of so simple a classification, under two heads. These designed chiefly to secure expression, and those whose chief object is to make the children collect the meaning of the passage read.

**I. RULE OF IMITATION.**—The great means to produce correct expression in reading may be said to consist in a steady adherence

to one rule—**THE RULE OF IMITATION**; that is, to reading the sentence as it ought to be read, and causing the child to exercise his powers of imitation upon the model thus placed before him.

Reading is, after all, but cultivated talking, and must, of necessity, be acquired as speaking itself is—by imitation. Where it is taught—that is, taught in the true sense of the word—the style of master and pupils ought to be very nearly the same; and this supplies a test, not, indeed, as to the quality of the reading, but as to whether it has been faithfully and earnestly attended to or not.

**TWO WAYS TO APPLY THE RULE.**—There are two ways in which the rule of imitation may be advantageously employed in practice: (1) Where the master reads and the child listens, and then endeavours to reproduce; (2) Where both read together. This last should be resorted to, however, only with the most backward, and chiefly in the junior classes; and, whenever used, the master should avail himself of the earliest opportunity of dispensing with it in favour of the other, which is the most rational and correct; for, when both read together, the master, being engaged in reading himself, cannot sufficiently attend to the errors of the child; and the child, being so completely engrossed with his own efforts on the one hand, and the master's style and tone on the other, is in danger of being too confused to imitate correctly, and must to a certainty lose the substance of what he reads.

**A THIRD WAY DESCRIBED BY MR. FLETCHER.**—There is, indeed, a third way of applying this rule, but, in my opinion, not so good as either of the others. It consists in allowing the child to make an effort himself, and then giving him the model, so that he may compare his own results with the true standard. Mr. Fletcher thus describes it: "First, the selected hard words are spelt by each child in rotation, the monitor spelling them correctly *after* each, and not before it, that it may be enabled to appreciate the correction, if there be any, through having already made an effort. Next, each boy reads a *word* of the text, which is also read correctly *after* him by the monitor; a *whole clause* is then read by each in like manner, and under like correction. Finally, each reads a sentence completely, and, when he stumbles, appeal is made to other boys, when he who makes the true correction gains one place, and but one."

The same gentleman describes the application of one of the other plans to the teaching of the junior classes thus: "The monitors (who should all read very well) read the lessons sentence by sentence after them, round and round the class, until all have read each sentence, and then they read without the leadership of the monitors."

**HINTS TO CARRY OUT RULE PROPERLY.**—When reading *with* the child, the teacher ought not to let his own exemplar reading be too continuous. He ought, occasionally, to cease, and allow the child to fill up the blank by himself, lest in the end he acquires the habit of repeating merely what he hears, and not what he sees. These blanks can be left in the easiest or most difficult parts, and made longer or shorter according to the proficiency of the child himself.

**NOT TO BE TOO MUCH AT A TIME.**—When reading *for* the child, the teacher ought not to read too much at a time. It is clear that if he do the child is almost certain to forget the tone and style of the beginning while listening to the end. A small sentence, or one or two clauses of a large one, will in most cases be found sufficient, but with the advanced children more may be read. Of the exact quantity the teacher himself will be the best judge.

**RULE SHOULD BE APPLIED EARLY.**—When not applied soon enough habits are formed which it is almost impossible to remove at any future time. Even the very lowest class children should be taught to group the words naturally—to speak them, in fact, as the master himself would speak them. Instead of permitting them to say, for instance, "He—thre—home—from—school," pausing after every word, they should be accustomed to say, "He thre home—from school." And this they can be taught to do by the master's repeating *for* them, or *along* with them, the words in groups as they ought to be repeated, and encouraging them to do so too. A few trials will produce the desired result, for children are quick in imitating.

**THIS NOW NEGLECTED.**—This grouping of words, although of vital importance, is almost wholly left without any special attention, and on this account pupils of the junior classes can scarcely be said at present to read at all. When I say this, I make a distinction between the mere naming of words in their order, which is sometimes, but erroneously, called reading, and the *naming of them in connected groups in accordance with their sense*, which alone is entitled to be so called.

**MR. SHEEHY'S OPINION OF READING IN THE PRIMER CLASS.**—Mr. Sheehy, Inspector of National Schools, Ireland, says: "When I examine the junior classes, I find that the children repeat the words in the one tone of voice, accent all equally, pause and nod after each word, and seem not to know what they read about. In fact," he adds, "their reading resembles very much the reading in time of a piece of music consisting of crotchets and crotchet-rests alternately."

**THIS WANT OF GROUPING NATURAL WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, IF UNAIDED.**—This hesitation is certainly very natural with children, for when struggling with the difficulties of distinguishing one