

Reading Aloud.

Thus far as to reading silently, which every child is taught who is taught at all. Reading aloud, however, seems almost gone out of fashion, except among those who do it in some way professionally. It is no longer really taught in schools, or it is taught in very few. A single generation has seen it pass away. The reason of this is twofold and strange. For it is first the great diffusion of education, and next the great increase in reading. Reading aloud cannot be taught in large classes, and consequently in public schools and in large private schools it has fallen into neglect. Not that there is no profuse made of teaching it, although even of this there is comparatively little; but that there has ceased to be that individual practice before the teacher, guided by his example as well as informed by his instruction, which used to be regarded as one of the most important of daily school exercises. This is much to be regretted. Better let two "branches" go than this of reading aloud. In fixing his attention, in leading to exactness of apprehension, in power of bringing the pupil's mind into a flexible adaptability to the thought presented to it, there is no exercise that will take the place of reading aloud. A person cannot read anything aloud well, with proper inflection and emphasis, without thoroughly understanding it. A pupil cannot scramble through and skip over what he knows that he is likely to be called upon to read aloud. It is among the very best of educational disciplines. Beside this, with a competent teacher it is, I need hardly say, the very best means of acquiring that clear enunciation which is one of the greatest beauties of speech, and which any observant person will find largely lacking in the younger people of the present day. Good English speaking and good English writing comes, except in cases of rare inborn faculty, chiefly by the reading aloud of good English authors under the supervision of a teacher who himself or herself speaks good English and understands those authors. Of such teachers how many may be found in our public or in our private schools? Of such teaching, or of the attempt at such teaching, how much?—Richard Grant White in the Times.

Mormon Women.

The women live in a state of degradation. Most of them are Welsh, Scotch, English, German, and Scandinavian, and are usually grossly ignorant, and (poor creatures!) homely-faced and dowdy-figured in the extreme. A Mormon usually speaks of his wives as his women, though too much ought not to be made of this, because the same phrase is commonly applied to their own and to other men's lawful wives by the rougher of the Western settlers. The male Mormons are intensely greedy after money. Their creed is a purely utilitarian one. I never heard of an American who, in these latter times, at least, joined them from a conviction of the truth of their religious principles; and, considering that it must be a strange creed that will not and converts to it in the United States, the fact—and fact I believe it to be—speaks volumes against the Mormons. Their "converts" are usually Europeans; and even then, the material advantages held out to the land-loving Swede or Welshman has as much to do with the matter as any idea about the truth of the faith compiled by Joe Smith and his successors. So far from considering the Mormon creed as the social and religious system of the best colonists in the world, I agree with those who think it contains within it elements of decay. They have been successful, not on account of Mormonism, but owing to causes with which their faith had nothing to do. Already it is decaying. The sons of Joe Smith, the founder, have seceded from the main body of the Church. Many of the adherents are grumbling at the heavy Church-dues they have to pay, while others, finding that, now civilization has overtaken them, they have nothing to gain, but much to lose socially by belonging to the Mormons, and that they will be protected by the Government, are falling away.—From "The Countries of the World," by Dr. Robert Brown.

The Gorilla.

Whatever may have been thought of the gorilla when Du Chaillu wrote his thrilling book, in which he described the creature at home, no one can doubt now that he is a veritable entity. The adventurous traveler was very commonly charged with having purchased one or two skins and prepared them à la Barnum for the astonishment of the credulous among his countrymen; while as to the general character and habits of the animal, he was thought by some to have evolved them from the depths of his inner consciousness, or to have borrowed his ideas from the Africans of the coast. With a representative of the hairy men among us, and one, too, that proves to be just about what Du Chaillu affirmed that they all were, the gorilla must now be accepted as one of our kith and kin, no longer to be relegated to the land of fable, or to be classed with pygmies, cyncephali, and satyrs. The gorilla is not only a veritable personage, but very probably an historical personage too. The gorilla, which, according to the "Periplus," Hanno flayed and deposited in the Panos temples, have commonly been considered to have been chimpanzees. Du Chaillu, however, thinks they were the veritable gorillas with which his name has been so intimately associated, and which, according to Burton, are still called, on the banks of the Gaboon, by a name phonetically almost identical. The surname by which we understand the animal now exhibiting in London is pleased to be distinguished—though, by the way, with all his intellectual endowments, he would probably be puzzled to give a single good reason why he should have a surname in a land where he is the only one of his species—the surname "Pongo" appears to be derived from the Mpongwe nation, in the vicinity of which the great black ape was first observed.

VIRTUE is goodness in a state of warfare. —Whately.

British and Foreign Notes.

THE Queen's Speech proroguing the Parliament was read in the House of Commons on the 14th inst. It is pacific in its tone.

CATTLE Disease is on the increase in London and its environs. It is infectious in its nature that it is dangerous for cattle to pass the infected districts or to drink from pools where diseased cattle have strayed.

The Spectator rejoices that "the splendid literature of England is no longer neglected by Englishmen, and that almost every illustrious author, from Chaucer to Sir Walter Scott, has been treated as a school classic."

The first Telegraph in China is now working. It is a private line, six miles long, erected by Li Hung Chang, Viceroy of Chiuh, from his official residence to Lottsen arsenal. There is no attempt at interference by the native populace, as is the case with telegraphs projected by foreigners.

Describing an interview he had with the Grand Duke Nicholas, the Scotsman's correspondent at Tiro says:—"The Grand Duke was in high spirits, and made many good-natured inquiries regarding Scotland. He informed me that his first governess, Miss Rodgers, was a Scotswoman, that the first language he learnt was Scotch, and that he always had a warm feeling for the Scotch and Scotland."

Mr. HANS BREITMAN LELAND has presented to the British Museum a copy of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation bearing the autograph signature of the President himself, countersigned by Mr. Seward, Secretary of State, and with his autograph. Only a few copies were issued with these autograph signatures, and they have now become excessively difficult to procure.

Narrow gauge railroads are becoming common. A narrower gauge is under contract, but whether it is the narrowest remains to be seen. A railroad two feet wide, between Billerica and Bedford, Mass., will soon be finished. Its passenger cars, now building at Laconia, N. H., will have a row of single seats on each side. The road is eight miles and a half long, and will cost about \$50,000, or less than \$6,000 per mile, only one-eighth of the cost of ordinary railroads.

The strike of the Pennsylvania miners still continues. The miners stand firm and will adhere to their demands. A proposition to resume work immediately, upon the same rates as paid in July, 1877, leaving it to the company to make an advance should they in their judgment deem it proper so to do, was received by the Pennsylvania coal company here with a firm no. Out of \$,600 men and boys employed by this company there were less than 200 that would sign it under any circumstance.

The famine in India is on the increase, and public appeals for charity are to be made. It is estimated that upwards of 500,000 people have already died from starvation, and despite the improvement in crop prospects the mortality must be terrible. The price of grain in the famine-stricken districts is very high—too high for the laboring classes to purchase. Both the government and charitable individuals are doing their utmost to alleviate the distress. A million and a half of people are in receipt of daily charity, and the famine must increase in the provinces of Madras and Mysore for six months, and probably be accompanied by pestilence. The prospect is indeed a gloomy one.

The Pope is reported in excellent health, in spite of the hot weather at Rome. On the 1st of August, the day dedicated to the Chains of St. Peter, he received the rectors and students of the English, Irish, Scotch, and all other foreign Colleges at Rome, and replied at length to an address read by the rector of the Pio Latino American College. A rumour has reached Rome that Russia contemplates the expulsion of the Capuchin friars from Poland, and the report has not contributed to the allayment of the suspicions with which the Russian Monarchy, as the head of the Greek Church, is regarded at the Vatican. A rupture, however, is not intended, unless the Czar make it absolutely necessary, for "a special commissioner has been appointed to treat upon the ecclesiastical matters at issue with Russia relating to Poland so soon as a basis for negotiation can be found."

MONSIGNOR CAPEL preached two sermons at St. Anthony's, Liverpool, on Sabbath, on auricular confession. Referring to the Anglican Ritualists, he said that men had arisen who had imitated the practices of the Catholic Church—men who had pretended that they were priests of God, with sacrificial power, and that to them was given the right of pronouncing absolution upon him who had sinned. He denied the existence of any relations between Catholics and Anglicans. If the latter took their opinions and imitated their practice they did it of themselves. Their earnestness and devoutness proved them to be worthy of a better cause than striving to Catholicise the Church of England. He pointed out that while the Catholic Church gave authority for the confessional, those who had undertaken confession in the Church of England had no authority to do what they did, and were acting contrary to the Thirty-nine Articles, by which they were bound. They said they were one of the branches of the Catholic Church, but he protested against such a statement. The Catholic Church had no relationship with them.

Knives and Forks.

We often laugh at the Chinese and their chopsticks, or small, thin sticks of wood or ivory, with which they eat, and fancy they must make very dirty work at their meals, yet they are cleanly and civilized, compared with the habits of our ancestors some three hundred years ago. Then forks were unknown; each man had his own knife and at dinner seized the joint with his hand, and cut off what he wished; the dish was then passed on to the next, who did the same. The knife then cut up the portions into small pieces, which were put into the mouth

by the fingers of the hand unoccupied by the knife.

In many parts of Spain, at present, drinking-glasses, spoons and forks are rareties; and in taverns in many countries, particularly in some towns in France, knives are not placed on the table, because it is expected that each person has one of his own, a custom which the French seem to have retained from the old Gauls. But as no person will cut without forks, landlords are obliged to furnish them, together with plates and spoons.

None of the sovereigns of England had forks till the reign of Henry VIII.; all, high and low, used their fingers. Hence, in the royal households there was a dignitary called oyster, or oway, who with a set of subordinates, attended at the table with basins, water and towels. The office of oyster survived after forks came partially into fashion. We learn that when James I. entertained the Spanish Ambassador at a dinner, very shortly after his accession, "Their majesties washed their hands with water from the same ewer, the towels being presented to the King by the Lord Treasurer, and to the Queen by the Lord High Admiral." The Prince of Wales had an ewer to himself, which was after him used by the ambassador.

About the first royal proemage in England who is known to have had a fork was Queen Elizabeth; but, although several were presented to her, it remains doubtful whether she used them on ordinary occasions. Forks came so slowly into use in England that they were employed only by the higher classes at the middle of the seventeenth century. About the period of the Revolution, 1689, few English noblemen had more than a dozen forks of silver, along with a few of iron and steel. At length for general use steel forks became an article of manufacture at Sheffield; at first they had but two prongs, and it was only in later times that the three-pronged kind were made.

As late as the early part of the eighteenth century table forks—and, we may add, knives—were kept on so small a scale by country inns in Scotland (and perhaps in some parts of England) that it was customary for gentlemen in travelling to carry with them a portable knife and fork in a shagreen case. The general introduction of silver forks into Great Britain is quite recent; it can be dated no further back than the termination of the French war in 1814.

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Efforts will be made during the coming year to make the PRESBYTERIAN increasingly attractive and useful to the large constituency it aims to represent. To this end the Editorial staff will be strengthened; a larger variety of Missionary Intelligence will be furnished by Dr. Fraser, Formosa; Rev. J. Fraser Campbell, and Rev. James Douglas, India; and special papers are expected from the following gentlemen:—

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We invite the cordial co-operation of ministers, elders, and people generally to aid in extending the circulation of the PRESBYTERIAN. Much has been done in this way already; but much still remains undone. Our circulation is now 6,000; there is no good reason why it should not be 16,000. If each of our present subscribers will only send us ANOTHER NAME we shall at once reach 16,000; and then to get the remainder will be a comparatively easy matter. Friends, help us in this particular.

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Notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of getting our Sabbath Schools to even introduce the S. S. PRESBYTERIAN, we have resolved to continue the publication for another year, believing that superintendents and teachers will be long to see the justice and propriety of making more regular than in the past. Last year we promised letters from the Rev. J. Fraser Campbell; but he only left a couple of months ago, so that it was impossible to reduce this promise. Both Mr. Campbell and Mr. Douglas will (D.V.) write during the coming year, and Dr. Fraser, who is already so well and favourably known to our young readers, will continue his valuable contributions.

Ministers and superintendents are earnestly invited to forward their orders without delay, so that we may know in good time the number to be printed for January.

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