

"Crafty men contem studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use: that is a wisdom without them, and won by observation. Read not to contradict, nor to believe, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory: if he confer little, have a present wit; and if he read little, have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, morals grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend."

Lord Macaulay has well observed: "It will hardly be disputed that this is a passage to be 'chewed and digested.' We do not believe that Thucydides himself has anywhere compressed so much thought into so small a space."

No book ever made so great a revolution in the mode of thinking, overthrew so many prejudices, introduced so many new opinions—as the *Novum Organum*. Its nicety of observation has never been surpassed; it blazes with wit, but with wit which is employed only to illustrate and decorate the truth. But what is most to be admired is the vast capacity of that intellect which, without effort, takes in at once all the domains of science—all the past, the present, and the future—all the encouraging signs of the passing times—all the bright hopes of the coming age.

Lord Bacon wrote paraphrases of the Psalms, of which it has been said: the "fine gold of David is so thoroughly melted down with the refined silver of Bacon, that the mixture shows nothing of alloy, but a metal greater in bulk, and differing in show from either of the component elements, yet exhibiting, at the same time, a lustre wholly derived from the most precious of them."

(To be continued.)

Suggestive Hints towards Improved Secular Instruction.

BY THE REV. RICHARD DAWES, A. M.

(Continued from our last.)

II.

GRAMMAR.

Grammar is taught here almost entirely through the reading lessons, and in this way, far from being the dry subject many have supposed it to be, it becomes one in which children take great interest. Any attempt by giving them dry definitions of parts of speech and rules of grammar is almost sure to fail; for one which it interests, it will disgust ten, and therefore the thing ought not to be attempted in this way. The most natural and easy manner seems to be, first,—

Pointing out the distinction between vowels, consonants, and diphthongs, from words in their lessons: when *a* or *an* is used before a noun; the difference between *a* table and *the* table, between *a* book and *the* book; *a* sheep, and *the* sheep; *a* deer, and *the* deer; whether they would say *a* house or *an* house; *a* hare or *an* hare; *an* heir, *an* hour; drawing attention to exceptions as they occur.

The next and easiest thing would be the nouns, pointing out all the things which they see around them; such as, book, table, map, etc.: and thus they immediately know that the names of all visible substances are called nouns. This being once fixed, they are soon led to the idea, that the names of things which they can imagine to exist, are nouns also;—to distinguish the *singular* from the *plural*: that the singular meant *one*, the plural more than one;—the general rule of forming the plural by adding *s*; house, houses; map, maps, etc.; the teacher taking care to point out the exceptions as they are met with in reading, such as ox, oxen; tooth, teeth; man, men; loaf, loaves; church, churches; city, cities; and to observe also, where anything like a general rule can be traced out, such as that nouns ending in *ch* soft make the plural by adding *es*, as church, churches; arch, arches; match, matches; while in *ch* hard they follow the general rule, as monarch, monarchs, etc.; in *sh*, as dish, dishes; fish, fishes, etc., adding *s*; in *f*, as leaf, loaf; changing *f* into *v*, and adding *es*, leaves, loaves; nouns ending in *y* into *ies*, as city, cities; fly, flies; why such words as boy, valley, do not follow the general rule. The difficulty of pronouncing *s* at the end of nouns ending in *ch*, *sh*, and *x*, show the reason for adding *es*.

I would strongly recommend to all our school teachers a small book by Professor Sullivan, called "The Spelling Book Super-seded," on this subject, as well as his other books, "Geography Generalized," his "Geography and History," and his "English Grammar," published by Marcus and John Sullivan, School and Educational Publishers, Dublin, and by Messrs. Longman, in London. They are all excellent in their way, and have done good service here. (1)

The teacher would do well to exercise the children in forming the plural of any particular class of nouns as they occur; for instance, nouns ending in *f*; as leaf; spell it in the plural, leaves; potato, potatoes; negro, negroes; echo, echoes; and making them quote all the nouns ending in *f* and in *o* they could possibly recollect; the same way for others. This calls forth great emulation, and is attended with good results.

The difference of gender, also, in nouns ought to be pointed out, a thing very necessary in this country (Hampshire); everything alive or dead, male or female, coming under the denomination *he*, never by any chance changed into *him*.

They would now be able when sitting down, and without the assistance of a teacher, to pick out all the nouns in a lesson, writing them in columns in the singular and plural number; also, to write on their slates, or as exercises on paper in the evenings, things of the following kind:—

The names of the months in the year, and the number of days in each.

Of all the things in their cottages and in their gardens—of all the tools used by the carpenter, such as plane, axe, chisel, etc.—by the blacksmith,—of all the implements used in agriculture, or in their trades and occupations.

What are the names of all the tools made of iron used in the village?

The names of all the trees—of the vegetable and animal products of the parish—of such vegetables as are food for man, for beast, etc.—of all articles of home consumption, etc.—of the materials of which the houses are built, etc.

Describe a dog, cat, barn-door fowl:—write the names of all the singing-birds—of the birds of prey, etc.: write down six names of birds, all of which are compound words.

A year, a month, a week, day, hour, are measures of what?

A yard, a foot, an inch—of what?

A quart, a bushel, etc.—of what?

The teacher might also set each child to write down the date of its birth—to make out how many years, months, weeks, days, etc., old it was; so as to give its age in all the different measures of time (2).

Being now able to point out the nouns, etc., they should advance two such words as qualify them—adjectives.

The teacher, holding up an apple, for instance, will ask, do all apples taste alike? No, sir; some are sour and some are sweet, bitter, etc. Do apples differ in any other way? Some are large and some are small—this is differing in size; some are red and some green—this is differing in colour; some soft and some hard—this is differing in the quality of hardness; some are rounder than others—differing in shape; and all these words, expressing different qualities in the noun, are adjectives. Then, perhaps, they are told to sit down and write all the words they can think of, which qualify the word apple, such as sour apple, sweet apple, large apple, etc.

Then to get the degrees of comparison: The teacher will observe the different sizes of the children, taking two of them out and making them stand side by side. When I say that this boy is taller than the one next to him, what am I comparing? The height of the two boys. This boy has got darker hair than the one next him—the colour of their hair: you have got cleaner hands than the boy next to you—the cleanness of my hands with the cleanness of his: such a child is the tallest in the class—is the best reader in the class. What do I compare? His or her height with the height of all the rest; his or her reading, etc. In this way, they will very soon understand what is meant by degrees of comparison, and should be told how to form them: tall, taller, tallest; great, greater, greatest, etc.; taking about half-a-dozen adjectives at a time, the

(1) The circulation of these excellent books of Professor Sullivan is become enormous, and now exceeds 120,000 copies a year.

(2) I have sometimes been much amused in asking children their ages when more than one happens to answer the same number of years, 8, 9, or 10, in getting them to reason out among themselves the exact ages of each—a thing to them by no means easy, but which may be made a very instructive lesson to the class.