

or quality of voice. I shall not dwell at length on these imperfections, seeing that they are generally recognized when met with, and measures taken to rectify them. Indistinct enunciation generally arises either from lack of power to articulate, or from sheer carelessness and laziness. In the former case, the organs and muscles used in speech should be strengthened by suitable exercises.

It is, therefore, useful for the teacher to know the position of the tongue, etc., in cases of difficult articulation, so as to be able to direct the pupil. I have found, however, that where there is actually no physical impediment, imitation is most effective, the teacher articulating, the pupil imitating. There is a common tendency to pass over prepositions of one syllable and unaccented syllables in long words. Pupils should be taught to give due prominence to these. It is good practice, therefore, frequently to drill individually and simultaneously on words and groups of words containing difficult articulations, at first slowly, strongly and distinctly, with some exaggeration, increasing to the requisite speed.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

- I. Such individual irregularities are generally irremediable.
- II. He acted contrary to the peremptory instructions given.
- III. It is a truly rural spot.

Another error of frequent occurrence in this respect is the running of one word into another. Example—"wood and grove" enunciated "wooden grove."

I shall pass over the subject of pronunciation with this remark, that teachers should strive to make themselves good models, and drill well and persistently on difficult words with special attention of accented syllables.

On expression the third quality of good reading, a long and profitable essay might be written. But, to keep this paper within due limits and not to weary you, I shall endeavor to be brief.

Reading may be both intelligent and intelligible without being expressive; whereas, expressive reading must have these two qualities, "and something more"; and to me it seems that this "something more," which we call expression, is especially wanting in our schools. It is wanting, I suppose, because it is thought difficult of attainment and difficult to teach. Nevertheless, it should be the crowning effort of the teacher to perfect and polish his work. Intelligence and intelligibility are more easily and naturally acquired than expressiveness. It is in expressive reading that we introduce art. "What then may expressive reading be?" say you. "Reading," says Currie, "is expressive when the tones of the voice are so adapted to the sense as to bring it out with a strong effect." It lays before the audience not merely the thought but also the emotion of the thought.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

- I. Read Othello's speech intelligently and intelligibly.
- II. Read Othello's speech with expression as it might be taught in the school-room.

I know not whether my next statement be true or false. I shall leave it open to discussion, as I hold myself open to conviction; but, from my own impressions, I am led to believe that, in our schools, "taste" in general is not cultivated as it should be—taste in language, in literature, in art, in feeling, in thought, in manner, in the beautiful. I am not a disciple of Oscar Wilde, nor do I think that all beauty is centred in a sunflower, much less that true aestheticism is a bundle of affectations. But I do think that "taste" should be cultivated more extensively than it is in the school-room. "Taste," says a standard educational authority, "is that faculty by which we appreciate what is beautiful in nature and in art." And although this definition does not quite correspond to my idea of what taste really is—for it seems to me to be rather the product of the cultivation of several faculties than a faculty itself—it will answer my purpose here.

The same authority goes on to say.—"The love of the beautiful is part of human nature, and one of the evidences of its dignity. It should therefore be educated for its own sake, as elevating that nature and increasing its means of happiness."

Where there exists a love of the beautiful, its influence may easily be reflected on personal circumstances and habits. Cheerfulness, tidiness, cleanliness, and order are immediately associated with the cultivation of taste. For it is natural that we should strive to imitate in our own arrangements the qualities we admire in what we see around us."

Of the influences at the teacher's command for cultivating and refining the taste, "next in power to his references in conversa-

tion and oral descriptions, should be reckoned the influence that may be exerted by the pupil's reading books," if the books are worthy of the name. But the same authority states again that "whilst reading-books properly constructed will refine the taste of the pupil who reads solely that he may apprehend their contents, they will still more refine the taste of him who is taught to read with those qualities of elocution which constitute expressive reading." I claim, then, for expressive reading a foremost place as an influence for refining and cultivating the taste. I claim also that, as an educative force, expressive reading ranks very high—so high that a man of taste, hearing a reader render in an intelligent but inexpressive manner a passage which demands a great expression, is reminded of Wordsworth's description of poor Peter Bell:—

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

With the higher and more perfect understanding of the piece which is so elevating and so quickening he seems to have no concern. I say seems, for it may be that to himself the passage has many beauties and sentiments which he is not capable of interpreting to his hearers, because he has not been educated and trained in this higher branch of the art of reading.

But is expressive reading so difficult of attainment, after all? I maintain not, if the study is pursued on rational principles. Children themselves are elocutionists born. A child, at a very early age, can wheedle and coax, can storm and exhibit anger. He seems to have the voice under perfect control, even when the feelings and incipient passions are not so. He is an adept in the use of inflections, emphases, tones, pitch, modulation and all the elements of elocution whose names he has never heard.

Now all these elements of expressive reading are there at the teacher's hand, fixed by nature and custom, and he has only to use and cultivate them. They are there; but how to get at them! Boys and girls, and even men and women, are in some respects like sensitive plants, but breathe on them and they close up. Although we do often see people of their own accord make fools of themselves, to use a common expression, yet it seems tolerably certain that there is in human nature a strong dislike to appear ridiculous. Now there is no study that requires a greater forgetfulness of self than expressive reading. And when the teacher has succeeded in breaking down this barrier of self and reserve which stands between him and his pupils, he has accomplished a great deal, and satisfactory results of his teaching will speedily appear. To do this, great tact and skill in conducting the reading lessons are required on the part of the teacher.

Expression entirely depends upon the cultivation of three things, the voice, the ear and taste, the first two of which can most readily, be cultivated in youth, taste which supposes a (fairly) ripened judgment only in a limited though an extensive degree. Voice culture is a subject in itself on which excellent works of reference may be easily obtained by those desiring to be informed. In England, of late years, a good deal of care and labor has been devoted to this pursuit; but it is in the United States that it receives the attention which it deserves. Before undertaking to practise on the voices of others, the teacher should himself have some sound knowledge on the subject of voice culture, as a wrong course may do more harm than good. Still, there are many exercises which every teacher could safely employ, well adapted to strengthen the voice, and to increase its flexibility and purity—such as simple exercises on pitch, tone, inflection, force and stress, which may be used also to vary the monotony of the ordinary reading lesson, and to impart additional interest to the teaching of reading.

Now, it is really by imitation that a child learns to speak, and imitation is an all-important factor in the process of learning to read with expression. Hence the necessity of cultivating the ear and of training it to detect the difference of tones, stress, etc. Now, the ear is cultivated by the exercises used for the culture of the voice; and thus, with voice and ear trained, a student's possibilities of acquiring expressiveness are greatly increased. With the power of imitating comes the necessity for good models, and these it is the duty of the teacher to furnish. Teachers of reading, therefore, should themselves be able to read with expression. The fact that reading, and especially this higher class of reading, is an art, and must be taught as an art, should never be lost sight of by the teacher. In the teaching of an art, as a means of acquiring, practice ranks first. The power to do so is best strengthened and increased by practice. It is not sufficient to instruct by word of