

thought, and are without the means of acquiring that knowledge. He must teach them to read, to write, to cipher, and impart to them the elements of religious knowledge; but this is not all: he will fail in one of the really valuable results of education if he do not farther teach them to think and to understand,—store their minds with legitimate subjects of thought, and cultivate the habit of self-instruction.

For accomplishing these objects, the time allowed him is short, the means limited, and generally inadequate.

If he has beforehand weighed the difficulties and discouragements of his work, carefully and systematically studied the best methods of encountering them, considered the various circumstances of the application of those methods, and practised himself in their use; and if, actuated by the highest motives,—in reliance on the Divine blessing,—strong in the requisite of preparation,—but without extravagant hopes of the results,—he then gives his heart to the work, and pursues it hopefully, cheerfully and perseveringly,—it will prosper in his hand.

Without such a preparation, his first impulse will be to sit down and weep; his second, in despair of any useful result, to shrink into the mere mechanical discharge of his school duties.

JOHN BRUCE,
Inspector of Schools.

(To be continued.)

Inaccuracies in Pronunciation.

I have thought that it might not be uninteresting nor unprofitable to the students, and, perhaps, to some of the teachers, who read the *Journal*, to call attention to some prevalent errors in the pronunciation of English words,—errors heard not only among the uneducated, but also too frequently in the discourse of those who are "high in reputation for wisdom" those, who ought to be examples of correctness. I therefore submit the following reflections and illustrations.

A very common fault is, a great deficiency in *clear and distinct articulation*. Many speakers clip their words so carelessly that a listener could not determine, from their pronunciation, whether the words, *every, history, interest, &c.*, contain three syllables or two; and, what sounds worse, would never imagine that *beginning, morning, &c.* end with *g*. Another error arises from the opposite extreme, that is, an *excess of articulation*. From a mistaken idea that *every letter must always have its appropriate sound*, many speakers enunciate such words as *often, soften, listen, &c.*, with utter disregard of the fact that, according to all authority, there is a *silent letter in each*. I was not a little amused, a short time since, to hear a speaker make quite an effort to articulate the *t* in *apostle*; and not long ago, to hear a whole *musical convention* not excepting the conductor, sing out "*softened*" with full stress on the last syllable.

Not unfrequently do we hear even *teachers*, talking of "*exponents, apparatus, i-deas, herths, &c.*, for exponents, apparatus, &c., without seeming to think that there is good authority for such pronunciation.

I have alluded to only a few cases, with the hope that it may lead some who have been careless in this respect to pay more attention to *good usage* as laid down in our standard dictionaries.

H. HUBBARD,
Inspector of Schools.

Danville, Oct. 4, 1860.

How to Pronounce "Dough."

A correspondent requests us to give insertion to the following lines, which he has copied for the purpose from some newspaper. They may serve to illustrate the many different sounds which certain syllables in the language are susceptible of rendering. To our French Canadian subscribers who are imperfectly acquainted with the English tongue, we may perhaps be permitted to explain the pronunciation, reminding them that, though they all rhyme to the eye, they do not to the ear. "Dough" is pronounced *do*; "cough," *cof*; "through," *throo*; "tough," *tuf*; "plough," *plou*; "enough," *enuf*; "bough," *boü*; and "trough," *trof*.

Wife made me some dumplings of dough,
They're better than meal for my cough;
Pray let them be boiled through,
But not till they're heavy and tough.
Now, I must be off to my plough
And the boys (when they've had enough),
Must keep the flies off with a bough,
While the old mare drinks out of a trough

School days of Eminent Men in Great-Britain.

By JOHN TIMBS, F. S. A.

(Continued from our last.)

CXXII.

HOW JAMES FERGUSON TAUGHT HIMSELF THE CLASSICS AND
ASTRONOMY.

Ferguson has been characterized as literally his own instructor in the very elements of knowledge; without the assistance either of books or a living teacher. He was born in 1710, in Banffshire, where his father was a day-labourer, but religious and honest. He taught his children to read and write, as they reached the proper age; but James was too impatient to wait till his regular turn came, and after listening to his father teaching his elder brother, he would get hold of the book, a 'try hard to master the lesson which he had thus heard gone over; and, ashamed to let his father know what he was about, he used to apply to an old woman to solve his difficulties. In this way he learned to read tolerably well before his father suspected that he knew his letters.

When about seven or eight years of age, Ferguson, seeing that to raise the fallen roof of his cottage, his father applied to it a beam, resting on a prop, in the manner of a lever, the young philosopher, by experiment with models which he made by a simple turning-lath and a little knife, actually discovered two of the most important elementary truths in mechanics—the lever, and the wheel and axle; and he afterwards hit upon other discoveries, without either book or teacher to assist him. While tending sheep in the fields, he used to make models of mills, spinning-wheels, &c.; and at night, he used to lie down on his back in the fields, observing the heavenly bodies. "I used to stretch," says he, "a thread with small beads on it, at arms-length, between my eye and the stars; sliding the beads upon it till they hid such and such stars from my eye, in order to take their apparent distances from one another; and then laying the thread down on a paper, I marked the stars thereon by the beads." His master encouraged him in these and similar pursuits, and, says Ferguson, "often took the threading flail out of my hands, and worked himself, while I sat by him in the barn, busy with my compasses, ruler, and pen." He also tells us how he made an artificial globe from a description in Gordon's *Geographical Grammar*; a wooden clock, with the neck of a broken bottle for the bell; and a time-piece or watch, moved by a spring of whalebone. After many years he came to London, became a popular lecturer on astronomy, and had George III., then a boy, among his auditors; Ferguson was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and wrote several works valuable for the simplicity and ingenuity of their elucidations.

CXXIII.

SHENSTONE'S "SCHOOLMISTRESS."

William Shenstone, "the poet of the Leasowes," was born upon that estate, at Hales-Owen, Shropshire, in 1714. He learned to read at what is termed a dame-school, and his venerable teacher has been immortalized in his poem of "The Schoolmistress." He soon received such delight from books, that he was always calling for fresh entertainment, and expected that when any of the family went to market, a new book should be brought to him, which, when it came, was in fondness carried to bed, and laid by him. It is related that when his request had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the same form, and pacified him for the night. As he grew older, he went for a time to the grammar-school at Hales-Owen, and was afterwards placed with an eminent schoolmaster at Solihull, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress. He was next sent to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he continued his name in the book ten years, but took no degree. At Oxford, in 1737, he published his first work, a small poetical miscellany, without his name. In 1740, appeared his Judgment of Hercules; and in two years afterwards his pleasing poem, in the stanza of Spenser, entitled the Schoolmistress, "so delightfully quaint and ludicrous, yet true to nature, that it has all the force and vividness of a painting by Teniers or Wilkie." The cottage of the dame was long preserved as a picturesque memorial of the poet. How vividly has he portrayed the teacher of a bygone age in these stanzas!