

It is by their aid that modulation and expression and emphasis, and all tones of thought and passion can be sounded. Let a gamut, ascending and descending at least an octave be placed before the class, and vowels sounds be associated with its notations. Let the pupils with inflated lungs strike the lowest note with the vowel *ah*, commencing with the utmost softness, gradually augmenting the force and swelling to the centre, then diminishing to the degree of force with which the sound was commenced. Each note of the scale should thus be sounded, the sound being prolonged in each case for many seconds. Thus, the practice of the music master will be of the greatest advantage in securing purity of tone and strength of voice to the reading scholar. The teacher may take his part in this exercise with sure benefit to his own vocal powers. Adults whose vocal organs have degenerated by bad usage, would, with a few months, daily practice, be delighted to find their voices renovated, with new powers of flexibility and purity of tone added to them.

The practice of vocalization on the musical scale brings us to another, and probably the most difficult element of good reading—it is that of *inflection*. Here again, if we commence with childhood, with its beautiful powers of inflection, our task is easy. But while the day and the Sunday school combine with their wretched monotonies to destroy the gift of music in childhood, the examples of public and private reading in the family, and the school, and the church, give sanction and permanency to the corruption; and so thoroughly successful are we in our bad training, that very few even among the educated classes are able, when the modulations are moderate, to tell whether an inflexion be a rising or a falling one. Yet no reading can be good, where the modulations expressive of the character and relationship of thought and the intensity of passion, are not observed. Relationship between interrupted thought can only be indicated to the hearers by the modulation of pitch and inflexion. Emphasis is a most important power in good reading and speaking: but emphasis does not consist alone, as our lexicons tell us, of “particular stress of voice,” but requires, as well as force, an alteration in pitch and a special inflection. In conversation, where man is under the control of his natural feelings, these modulations are more frequent. It is when he *reads*, that is, when he interprets written thought by vocal tones that he fails, and the want of vocal culture appears. It is the absence of this natural and correct modulation that makes written speeches and sermons so objectionable. The written production ought to be superior to what is called an extemporaneous production, because it has been more carefully arranged and has the advantages of deep pre-meditation, and if read on the principles of a correct and natural elocution would stand in higher favour than the speech or sermon delivered from notes, or composed during the excitement of delivery. The loftiest productions of dramatic genius have been written, and when recited by the gifted actor or accomplished reader, they carry with them an influence rarely surpassed by extemporaneous productions. But the written speech or sermon is *read* not *spoken*; that is, the voice has no sympathy with the thought, which it has when the speaker is not controlled and fettered by old and pernicious habits.