

ing will prove almost totally useless. A good newspaper or magazine can hardly be surpassed as a *vade mecum*. To read well, that is naturally, one must not only know every word at sight, and be thoroughly conversant with the subject, but he must possess the faculty of being able to *say* one word and *look* at another, while he anticipates half-a-dozen more. This aspect of the question is rarely referred to by any Burlibus, nor is any *new method* suggested by means of which the three-fold power may be attained, short of persistent and repeated effort. When a child pauses between such words as "It is an ox," want of ability to recognize the combinations of letters only half explains the difficulty, the other half being accounted for by an incapacity to fix his attention on more than one word at a time or, to look at one, and say another. The best reader, other things being equal, is he who can see farthest ahead. For improvement in other respects, it would appear to us that the only advice necessary is comprehended in "constant watchfulness and close imitation." These, as a matter of self-culture on the part of the teacher, cannot fail, indirectly, of producing excellent results in the school-room; and if the parents would but provide interesting matter for the perusal of the children at home, we should hear fewer complaints than we do, of bad reading, and the species Burlibus so far as their self-imposed occupation is concerned, would find themselves in the position of Othello, a gentleman whose *timely* fate most of them might do worse than parallel.

The difficulties attempted to be surmounted by all the new-fangled systems are chiefly attributable to

what Max Müller characterizes as our "barbarous orthography," and nothing short of pure *phonetics* can ever accomplish the desired result. *Phonics* only makes "confusion worse confounded."

Let the teacher make himself a good reader by *any* system, and he need have no qualms of conscience about his want of success. As Dean Stanley said in an address some time ago: "The solution of all educational difficulties was to find really capable teachers. He wished to impress upon those who had to go out to commence the work, that it depended upon their exertions, on the amount of heart and soul which they could throw into their work, and on the amount of energy and the power of imparting energy, which they could bring to bear, whether the education of the children in their hands should be a complete success or a total failure. The solution of educational difficulties depended not so much upon the questions *talked about*, as upon the character of the teachers."

Heartily believing, notwithstanding our strictures on twaddle, iteration, verbiage, that much may be done on purely common-sense principles to improve the school rendering of English, we can enter fully into the spirit of the phonetic prayer (if we may be permitted to substitute just one word) in the following verse:

"God bless this land, and bless us all with wisdom we beseech;
And grant henceforth that *reading* be as fleet and free as speech."

For other reasons than to find out how to read, it is much to be wished that every teacher might have an opportunity of perusing the article we have here commented upon.