

## Readings and Recitations.

### GUARD YOUR WORDS.

Keep guard of your words, my darlings,  
For words are wonderful things:  
They are sweet like the bee's fresh honey,  
Like the bees they have terrible stings.  
They can melt like the warm, glad sunshine,  
And brighten a lonely life,  
They can cut in the strife of anger,  
Like an open two-edged knife.

Let them pass through your lips unchallenged,  
If their errand is true and kind;  
If they come to support the weary,  
To comfort and help the blind.  
If a bitter, revengeful spirit  
Prompts the words, let them be unsaid;  
They may flash through a brain like lightning,  
Or fall on a heart like lead.

Keep them back if they're cold and cruel,  
Under bar, and lock and seal;  
The wounds they make, my darlings,  
Are always slow to heal.  
May peace guard your lives, and ever,  
From this time of your early youth,  
May the words that you daily utter  
Be the beautiful words of truth.

### TWO AND ONE. RECITATION.

Two ears and only one mouth have you:  
The reason, I think, is clear:  
It teaches, my child, that it will not do  
To talk about all you hear.

Two eyes and only one mouth have you:  
The reason of this must be,  
That you should learn that it will not do  
To talk about all you see.

Two hands and only one mouth have you;  
And it is worth repeating,—  
The two are for work you will have to do,  
The one is enough for eating.

### AN OLD SAW.

A dear little maid came skipping out  
In the glad new day with merry shout;  
With dancing feet and flowing hair  
She sang with joy in the morning air.

"Don't sing before breakfast, you'll cry before night!"  
What a croak, to darken the child's delight!  
The stupid old nurse, again and again,  
Repeated the ancient dull refrain.

The child paused, trying to understand;  
But her eyes saw the great world rainbow-spanned;  
Her light little feet hardly touched the earth,  
And her soul brimmed over with innocent mirth.

"Never mind—don't listen—O sweet little maid!  
Make sure of your morning song," I said;  
"And if pain must meet you, why, all the more  
Be glad of the raptures that came before.

"O, tears and sorrow are plenty enough,  
Storms may be bitter and paths may be rough,  
But our tears should fall like the dear Earth's showers,  
That help to ripen the fruits and flowers.

"So gladden the day with your blissful song—  
Sing on while you may, dear, sweet and strong!  
Make sure of your moment of pure delight,  
No matter what trials may come before night."

## Teachers' Associations.

### SOUTH ESSEX.

The following is a synopsis of the discussions at the local or township conventions of teachers in South Essex on the 17th, 18th, 19th, 27th and 28th of October:

### HOW TO REDUCE IRREGULARITY OF ATTENDANCE TO A MINIMUM.

(1) *Teachers visit parents and guardians.*—Many wrong impressions and many false reports can be removed by a single visit to the children's homes. Teachers object to visiting, because of the time required. Short visits, with agreeable and useful conversation, are much more acceptable and profitable to all parties concerned. Parents rarely have time for lengthened visits. Two or three homes may be visited in one evening.

(2) *Give prizes for regularity of attendance.*

#### ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF PRIZES.

- (a) Long continued experience has shown that prizes are useful.
- (b) The expectation of gaining a prize increases interest in study.
- (c) The prospect of gaining a prize promotes competition.

#### ARGUMENTS AGAINST PRIZES.

- (a) Undue prominence is given to a comparatively unworthy object, the higher object being overlooked.
- (b) Jealousy is aroused and fostered.
- (c) The prize rewards success, not effort; talent, not worth.
- (d) Only a few pupils are stimulated, the rest become indifferent.
- (e) The gaining of the prize being the chief motive to effort, the habit will not be continued when the prize is withdrawn.

If prizes are given for attendance, all pupils who attend a given number of days should receive the same valued prize, e.g., all between whole year and 200 days, between 200 and 150, between 150 and 100 days, &c.; but there should be a minimum of days below which no prize should be given.

(3) *Visitation of school by parents, trustees, and school visitors.*

(4) *Enforcement of compulsory attendance law by trustees.*

(5) *Monthly public reviews.*

(6) *Monthly reports.*—Reports nearly always favorable to the pupils are made to parents; hence the teacher should in self-defence use every means to keep parents correctly informed on school matters. Some educators do not consider the management of a school, without a system of reports, perfect.

(7) *Merit marks.*

#### ARGUMENTS FOR THEM.

- (a) They aid in giving system to the working of the school.
- (b) They constitute a convenient medium of conveying a truthful account of the pupil's conduct, progress, &c., to parents and friends.
- (c) They facilitate making transfers from one class to another.
- (d) Although it does not appeal to high motives, yet the great majority of students have not formed high ideals of human perfection, and cannot be actuated by motives prompting to their attainment.

#### ARGUMENTS AGAINST THEM.

- (a) Only the merits of the recitation can be marked, no account being taken of difference in abilities or opportunities.
  - (b) Pupil's attention is diverted from the high object of study to the low one of gaining good marks.
  - (c) Much time is wasted in marking each lesson.
  - (d) Pupils cannot always correctly estimate the value of an answer or action, hence jealousy may be aroused.
- (8) *Make school interesting.*

(a) *Decorate school-room.*—Expensive decoration is quite unnecessary. Cheap pictures, illustrating natural scenery, historic characters or places, or animals, &c.; but all such pictures should constitute a subject of study for pupils, and they should be taught to appreciate their excellence.

(b) *Recitations.*—The selection should be known to the pupil and teacher only, also the time when it is to be recited. Stated times for recitations have very little influence on the rest of school-time. Give variety to school-work by having recitations frequently.

(c) *Singing*—both solos and choruses, at fixed times, and occasionally during the day.

(d) *School newspaper*—consists of a large scrap-book made of wrapping paper. Pupils gather news (not gossip), write a composition, which, when revised and corrected, is pasted into the scrap-book. At intervals during the day, or at stated times, the teacher, or some pupil, reads selections from this paper; but the book must be kept sacredly closed from the school, or it will cease to be entertaining.

(e) *Teacher must show himself to be the pupil's friend* by taking part in school games, by enquiries about his health, his friends, his engagements, his expectations, his reading, by giving advice how to gain more pleasure or some profit, &c.

(f) *Geniality of manner without undue familiarity* between teacher and pupils, and between pupils themselves.

(9) *Forfeiture of standing by pupil.*—Pupils may change places in class daily, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, or have names placed on honor-roll. Absence from school or lateness in arriving at school, or tardiness in coming to the class, may cause a forfeiture of standing.