

forty years ago were not so recalcitrant as to be beyond attainment and use by a teacher of moderate abilities and acquirement who set himself earnestly to his work. As I remember it, this was the way in which we were taught to read with pleasure to ourselves and with at least satisfaction to our hearers. Boys of not more than seven to nine years old were exercised in defining words from an abridged dictionary. The word was spelled and the definition given from memory, and then the teacher asked questions which tested the pupil's comprehension of the definition that he had given, and the members of the class, never more than a dozen or fourteen in number, were encouraged to give in their own language their notion of the word and to distinguish it from so-called synonyms. As to the amount of knowledge that was thus gained it was very little—little, at least, in comparison with the value of this exercise as education, that is, of mental training, which was very great. The same class read aloud every day, and the books that they read were of sufficient interest to tempt boys to read them of themselves. The class was called up before the teacher, and ranged itself—"dressed," as the soldiers say—in line. At a signal they all bowed together a profound bow, and if this was done awkwardly by the class as a whole, or by any individual, the process was repeated and instruction was given by the teacher, with example. No bobbing of heads was allowed, no awkward position of the arms and hands, or of the legs and feet, was passed over unnoticed. A decorous bow from a boy to his master or his elder was a matter of the minor morals. When the reading began all the class were obliged to follow the reader, each in his own book; for any pupil was liable to be called upon to take up the recitation,

even at an unfinished sentence, and go on with it; and if he hesitated in such a manner as shewed that his eye and mind were not with the reader's, the effect upon his mark account was the same as if he himself had failed in reading. If the reading of any sentence did not shew a just apprehension of its meaning the reader was stopped, and the sentence was passed through the class for a better expression of its sense. Whether this was obtained from the pupils or not, the teacher then explained the sense, or gave some information, the want of which had caused the failure, and by repetition of both readings—the bad and the good—shewed by contrast and by comment why the one was bad and why the other good. Words were explained; if they were compound words they were analyzed; the different shades of meaning which words have in different connections were remarked upon, and the subject of the essay, the narration, or the poem which formed the lesson for the day was explained. The delivery of the voice was attended to; not in any pretentious, artificial, elocutionary way, but with such regard for good and pleasant speech as was dictated by common sense and good breeding. The young readers were not allowed to hang their heads either over their bosoms or over their shoulders, but were made to stand up straight, throw back their shoulders, and lift their heads well up, so that if their eyes were taken from their books they would look a man straight in the face. Only in this position can the voice be well delivered. The slightest mispronunciation was, of course, observed and corrected, and not only so, but bad enunciation was checked, and all slovenly mumbling was reprehended, and as far as possible reformed. Yet with all this there was constant caution against a prim, pedantic, and even a conscious mode of