

Correspondence.

NOTE UPON PROPOSITIONS 18 AND 20, EUCLID, BOOK I.

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY.

TAKING the figure of Prop. 18 as given in the ordinary text-books on geometry, viz.: ABC the original triangle, AC greater than AB, AD cut off equal to AB, and CD joined; we have at once $CD = \text{difference between the sides}$. Then may be shown (using I., 32) that:—

(1) Angle $ABD = \text{one-half sum of the angles } ABC, ACB$.

(2) Angle $DBC = \text{one-half difference between the same angles}$.

The following problems will also be suggested by the figure:—

(1) Given the base, the difference between the sides, and the smaller angle at the base, to construct a triangle.

(2) Given the base, the difference between the sides, and the difference between the angles at the base, to construct a triangle.

(3) Given the base, the difference between the sides, and the sum of the angles at the base, to construct a triangle.

(4) Given the hypotenuse, and the difference between the other two sides, to construct a right-angled triangle.

Also the well-known theorem, "Any side of a triangle is greater than the difference between the other two sides," can be proved by reference to the figure of Prop. 18.

Taking the figure of I., 20, viz.: ABC the triangle, BA produced to D so that $AD = AC$, and DC joined, the figure will suggest constructions for the following:—

(1) Given the base, one angle at the base, and the sum of the other two sides, to construct a triangle.

(2) Given the base, the sum of the other two sides, and the sum of the angles at the base, to construct a triangle.

(3) Given the hypotenuse, and the sum of the other two sides, to construct a right-angled triangle.

(4) Given the perimeter and one angle (acute) of a right-angled triangle, to construct a right-angled triangle.

(5) Given the perimeter of an equilateral triangle, to construct the triangle.

(6) To trisect a given straight line.

(7) Given the perimeter of a triangle, and the two angles at the base, to construct a triangle.

The foregoing is, it may be observed in conclusion, not exhaustive, nor indeed original. Still, to the best of the writer's knowledge there is no attempt made in any of the text-books in use to group deductions under the heads of figures of propositions as has been attempted above.

D. F. H. WILKINS.

High School, Mount Forest, Dec. 4th, 1885.

READING BOOKS—WHY NOT PHONETIC?

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY.

SIR,—Your note on page 757, Nov. 26, interested me very much, for I have been trying the experiment of teaching my boys—aged six and four respectively—to read by means of pure

phonetics. The book I use is Benn Pitman's "Phonetic Primer," the chief feature of which is that each sound has a distinct letter. Hence there are no contradictions to puzzle little heads. Hence, also, the development of skill and speed in reading is natural, easy and pleasant. I was somewhat surprised to find no mention made in your article of *phonetic* reading books, which are far superior, not only to all ordinary ones, but also to those based on the *phonic* method, which, as you observe, cannot be carried very far, and which presents insuperable difficulties at the very commencement.

I hope the teachers who may have read thus far will not fear the infliction of a mass of arguments for spelling reform; but I wish to aid the teachers in the tedious task of teaching to read and spell; and from my experience with my own children I can most heartily urge the claims of phonetic reading books as a *beginning*. My own ideas are so well set forth by Mr. Frederik A. Fernald, in the *Popular Science Monthly* for September, that I quote:—

"Children can and do learn to read English spelled phonetically in a very few lessons, and learn the traditional spelling so quickly afterwards that much less time is required for the whole process than is commonly devoted to memorizing the current spelling alone. Classes taught to read in this way in Massachusetts, so early as 1851, proved the advantage of the method to the satisfaction of that able educator, Horace Mann; and the method has been successfully employed in many places in this country and the British Isles. The following extract from a letter written by Mr. William Colbourne, manager of the Dorset Bank, at Sturminster, England, since deceased, furnishes a special example, though it may be conceded to be exceptionally favorable:—

"My little Sidney, who is now a few months more than 4 years old, will read any phonetic book without the slightest hesitation; the hardest names or the longest words in the Old or New Testament form no obstacle to him. And how long do you think it took me—for I am his teacher—to impart to him this power? Why, something less than eight hours! You may believe it or not, as you like, but I am confident that not more than that amount of time was spent on him, and that was in snatches of five minutes at a time, while tea was getting ready. I know you will be inclined to say: "All that is very well, but what is the use of reading phonetic books? He is still as far off, and maybe farther, from reading romanian books." But in this you are mistaken. Take another example. His next elder brother, a boy of six years, has had a phonetic education so far. What is the consequence? Why, reading in the first stage was so delightful and easy a thing to him that he *taught himself* to read romanically; and it would be a difficult matter to find one boy in twenty of a corresponding age that can read half so well as he can in any book. Again, my oldest boy has written more phonetic shorthand and long-hand, perhaps, than any boy of his age (11 years) in the Kingdom; and no one, I dare say, has had less to do with that absurdity of absurdities, the spelling-book! He is now at a first rate school in Wiltshire, and in the half-year preceding Christmas he carried off the prize for *orthography* in a contest with boys, some of them his senior by years."

I may add that my experience conforms in general detail to that of Mr. Colbourne, though my boys have not been so strikingly successful as his. I am sure those of your readers who have the training of young children would very heartily appreciate the aid of a phonetic reading book; and I think the Education Department would do wisely to allow the introduction of a simple set of phonetic charts.

T. B.

Toronto, Nov. 30.

SYSTEMATIC PRONUNCIATION.

To the Editor of the EDUCATIONAL WEEKLY.

SIR,—I notice in a recent number of the WEEKLY a paper bearing the above heading from the pen of Mr. M. L. Rouse, of Toronto. The subject is an interesting one and has not as yet, I fear, received the attention that its importance demands. A student who attempts to study English, ignoring meanwhile the important element of pronunciation, will find his English acquirements assessed low in the company of *true* scholars. If a portion of the time now wasted in chasing up and memorizing the back notes that disfigure the annotated text-books in English literature, was devoted to the study of pronunciation—a very first essential in correct reading—we might remove from our high schools the stigma that hundreds of our pupils, engaged in brave hand-to-hand combat with the subtleties of Coleridge, do not understand or recognize, when reading, the simple vowel sounds. Nay more! we could give them in exchange for a useless and temporary acquirement *the music of speech* whose melody would grace for all time the every-day English of life. And here I am reminded of a statement made by Mr. Rouse to which I take exception. I quote his words: "One of the very best tests of the way in which a syllable should be pronounced is the sound that it is made by the poets to rhyme with." If I mistake not, the late Dr. Mulvaney contributed a few years ago to a Toronto school journal a paper wherein he proved most satisfactorily that the *divine afflatus* "with spurs of gold," frequently o'erleaps both usage and dictionary in its mad desire for rhyme. Let me here, by way of example, introduce a few quotations from the poets. The first will be from Coleridge:

"The Wedding guest sat on a stone;
He cannot choose but *hear*:
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed *Mariner*."

You will see at a glance that perfect rhyme here—intended no doubt by the poet—would destroy the correct pronunciation of "mariner." Again we read in Dryden:

"Thy genius calls thee not to purchase *fame*
In keen iambics but mild *anagram*."

And still another from Bret Harte's beautiful and touching poem of "Dickens in Camp":

"Till one arose, and from his pack's scant *treasure*,
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless
leisure,
To hear the tale anew."

The above examples are, I think, sufficient to show that no reliance in pronunciation can be safely placed in the rhyme that the poet labors to establish. Nor do I think that a pronunciation which obtains north or south of the Tweed should largely concern Canadian scholars. Canadian custom and a standard dictionary should constitute our Court of Appeal. Our best dictionaries and best Canadian scholars uphold *agen* as the correct pronunciation of *again*, and I for one am not disposed to acknowledge any higher tribunal of English orthoëpy. Yours faithfully,

THOMAS O'HAGAN.

High School, Pembroke, Nov. 24th, 1885.

MISS YORKE will succeed Mr. Drinnan as teacher of the Coldwater School for the ensuing year. She will have an assistant.—*Orillia Packet*.