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PARKER ON TEACHING READING.

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To Read and Write comes by Nature.—DOGBERRY.

MR. PARKER'S article on "Reading" which appeared in the December *Monthly*, was probably intended for the "instruction and reproof" of American teachers. If his description of American methods is a true one, there is pressing need of missionary work, and we do not wonder that his enthusiasm has prompted him to assume the rôle of a *vox clamantis* in the desert of American pedagogy. His alleged facts have little or no relevancy to Canadian methods; but, as his "doctrine" is a curious mixture of exaggerated statement and fallacious inference, it ought not to pass unchallenged among the teachers of the Dominion. The substance of his argument on "Reading" is: NATURE is the true teacher; MAN is the false teacher. Under the fostering care of Nature the child would learn "to talk well, and of course to read well;" but her "inmate man"—with

his wonted perversity—frustrates her beneficence; and instead of accent, pause, emphasis, melody, harmony, in a word all the elements of pure delivery, into which kindly Nature would train the child-voice, we have the whine, and groan, and slovenly articulation, and all the well-known "abominations" of delivery, into which the "devices" of man develop the child-voice. This, if true, is bad, very bad. But is it true? As a teacher, is Nature the all-benevolent, and man the all-malevolent? We have a glimmer of hope that the teacher, Man, is not so black as he is painted, and a sad suspicion that the teacher, Nature, is not so white as she is painted. A brief examination of the utterances of Mr. Parker—the minister and interpreter of "Nature"—will show that, like most oracles, they are ambiguous, not to say self-contradictory. Let us glance at some of them.