

is perfect. Drop such words for a short time, then take them up again.

(4). When it can be done, put the weak spellers in a class or sub-division of a class by themselves, so that they may receive special attention. Encourage every sign of improvement. Their improvement is generally slow, but exercise patience. Unless the pupils work as earnestly as the teacher, the results will be poor. It is almost wonderful what a change can be made upon bad spellers if they can only be led to work with the teacher.

Other similar experiments may be resorted to; variety even in this is better, provided the effort has a good basis. No matter how skilfully the work may be done, the progress will be comparatively slow, and the rate will be increased only by getting the pupil to increase his efforts and his desire to improve his own defect. I have also found that writing compositions on a familiar subject was a good means of getting pupils to write correctly their own vocabulary. In this way the errors likely to be made by them in actual correspondence would come out, and would be dealt with after the manner before mentioned.

Before I close these remarks, I might give a hint or two to advantage. When you have a timid speller, don't assume a facial expression on a par with the Emperor Nero's. Encourage him to take his time, and lead him to see that in spelling we first require a correct picture, and then the right order of saying the letters. Once more encourage your backward pupils, and remember "Rome was not built in a day." In a short time you will have your efforts rewarded by seeing the so-called laggards shoot ahead, and distance some of your more brilliant pupils.

## CANADIAN HISTORY.

"BY JUNIUS."

My theme is History; my field of operations an ungraded school in the oil producing district. My material is not of the brightest, in fact I believe some degrees below the average in mental energy, vivacity, retentiveness, etc.—qualities in the pupil only too desirable for the successful teaching of this subject. In fact, where these qualities are wanting, the hurried teacher, over eager for results, and blind to true progress, is tempted to fall back upon old time methods, though, to the thoughtful, they only call for higher effort and more thoughtful work. I come at them somewhat after this fashion:

Before promotion from second to third form pupils are supposed to be familiar with the municipal system of their own municipality, and with its general geography. Up to this time nothing is known of History in distinction from Geography, and indeed I scarcely know at what period the one subject emerges from the other and appears on the time table as a distinct branch. It is certainly not until after the first six or eight months.

I find it desirable, in preparing the minds of the pupils for history in a broader sense, to begin with the municipality. I call attention to changes in the immediate

neighborhood, due to the disappearance of forests, the improvement of farms, the planting of shade trees and orchards, the improvement of roads, the condition of disused or newly opened roads, the growth of villages, towns, etc., connecting with each the opening up of some view, or the increase of some established industry. Somewhat in this way I endeavor to convey a true conception of the steady, onward march of civilization.

As an aid in gaining the general fund of information necessary to a proper comprehension of the world we live in, as it is to-day, information lessons should be given, in which means of transit, such as the railroad, steamboat, street car, also such modern conveniences as the electric light, gas light, telephone and telegraph occupy a prominent place. It is desirable always to point out how each is an improvement on some previous method, thus bringing into contrast present and past. These afford excellent topics for compositions, e.g., a sail on a steamboat, a ride on a horse, or better, on an electric car, a visit by rail, a last journey to market. And just here I may be excused for putting forward the claim that the country boy, although he may find more difficulty in comprehending modern city conveniences and institutions for public benefit, will, as a rule, take a truer and readier grasp of the past history of his country than will the city-bred pupil, inasmuch as he is more truly the child of nature in his everyday surroundings, and perhaps in actual experience, in cutting a home in the forest, than is the latter.

Of course in my present school I take my class very minutely into the prevailing industry of the neighborhood as carried on to-day, i.e., the production and refining of oil.

The class is now prepared to take a peep into the past, even farther back than their short glimpse of life will enable them. This is a delicate matter, this first peep at the past history of one's actual surroundings; this hitherto unasked stretch of the imagination, upon the reality and vividness of which depends so much their future progress. As stated before I give special attention to the history of the oil industry. We go back together to the time when the River Sydenham's sluggish waters were thickly covered with crude petroleum, and Petrolea and Oil Springs, the present centres of the industry, were one unbroken forest. We trace the discovery of the oil and the opening up of the industry in Oil Springs, and subsequently in Petrolea. The methods by which it was first pumped, stored and exported, serve a useful purpose in their comparison with modern familiar methods. Compare, for instance, the old system of excavating a hole by means of pick, spade and windlass, with the present method of boring and drilling; the old method of conveying a barrel of oil six miles on a *travoy* through the heaviest of clay roads to Wyoming, the nearest station, with the present elaborate system of pipe lines in use to convey the crude oil to the tanking companies' storage tanks. It lends an interesting touch of reality to the pupils to be told that their teacher's relatives were actively engaged in the growth of the industry from the beginning, having

opened up one of the first stores in Petrolea, transporting their first small stock from Strathroy, and not by rail either. Encourage pupils to get home knowledge and thus have your own version unconsciously verified by parents.

I would like to give a more extended account of these talks, but as they could be of value to comparatively few of the readers of THE JOURNAL, I refrain. The foregoing can be but suggestive of a plan which teachers must adapt to their surroundings.

Having become sufficiently familiar with the history of the municipality, which is clearly within the range of their comprehension, it is but a step to pass to the history of our own Province, and of our Dominion. Having placed my readers on the track let me be more general.

Call it Geography or History, which you will, the class must now have a knowledge of the Dominion, its political subdivisions, and the climates, people, industries, etc. of each respectively. This it is well to teach side by side with the foregoing. They should also have a general knowledge of the parliamentary system, which is a natural step from the municipal system.

At this stage I consider it very unwise to crowd the child-mind with an elaborate explanation of our parliamentary system in detail. He cannot see the fathers of our land sitting in state on Parliament Hill, shaping the destinies of a nation, and influenced in all their actions by a political design far beyond their depth of comprehension. They cannot see the Ministers in charge of their various departments, nor can they have more than a vague comprehension of the relations existing between Canada and the mother country, and of the nature of the bond which unites the two. But they *can* see the men at work upon the roads, the bridge in course of construction, the necessity for an assessor, a tax-collector, a constabulary, a township council, a poor house, a jail, a county road, and a county council; a school system, an Inspector of schools, a court house, a management of crown lands, a Provincial Parliament; a militia, a medium of exchange, a management of industries, and of revenues, a Dominion Parliament. In short, they see the necessity of law and order, and get an idea of the general management of a country's affairs by its chosen representatives.

What have we now? A fair conception of Canada as it is to-day. As before we must now draw more extensively on the imagination, but it is strong, too, and active, too much so, you, perhaps, will say. Well, better so than void, for on it we must rely. Only let it be properly directed, and although, through the child's creative faculties, he may acquire strange notions, yet the true pictures gained will amply repay the trouble, and careful reproduction will settle inaccuracies. Take the class back to the admission of the Provinces P.E.I., B.C., and Manitoba. These events leading to and embracing Riel's Rebellions in the Saskatchewan and Red River Districts, the building of the C. P. R., the Hudson's Bay Co. From this we go back to Confederation.

In the same manner we go back to the early French settlement, taking up the