

only grasp the idea that, with a language so irregularly spelt as English is, the problems of teaching to read and teaching to spell should be treated separately, and a child should not be called upon to spell at all until he or she was able to read with fluency. As Her Majesty's inspector would not tolerate any liberties being taken with the mode of spelling now current, reading-books in phonetic spelling were at present out of the question, and teachers wishing to adopt a better mode of teaching reading had to be content with the "phonic" system, which retained the ordinary spelling, but, by means of italics and accents, gave a workable approximation to the sound of the spoken word. Mr. Rundell then explained Robinson's phonic method, which is largely adopted with excellent result in many elementary schools under inspection in the North of England, especially at Leeds.—*School Guardian (Eng.)*

PROMOTIONS.

We wish now to notice what we fear to be a growing evil in the schools of the day. Pupils are often advanced from one grade to another before they have done their work well, just as in the country they are advanced from one book to another without careful preparation. If parents and pupils knew that superintendents would promote only such scholars as did good work, many absences and tardy marks which we now have would be wanting and there would be general attention to business which would save a deal of trouble. It is the listless and vicious in a school-room who are generally behind, and when once they have acquired the idea that somehow they are going to pass along with their class, they will find plenty of time and opportunity to exercise those vicious traits. To let them slide along easily is not only unjust to the scholar, but also to the teacher who has to take them. It is not pleasant for a superintendent to say to a pupil "you cannot be promoted" and it sometimes brings on a storm of abuse from parents. If a teacher consults only his own ease, and wishes to get rid of some bad boy or girl, he may try to make it seem best to pass him along, but no such reason should ever take the place of a governing motive. We know it to be true that the intellectual leaders of our classes, are not our cases of discipline; that fact alone ought to forbid any prize being put upon school wickedness by promotion. You could hardly find such a thing as a boy who had no feeling on the subject of being dropped from a class be he ever so ugly, and so it would do him good morally as well as intellectually to hold him closely to the work, for he would find less time to practise his evil propensities, and at the same time would be laying up a store of facts, which would help to make a man of him.

There is no law in any school which compels all scholars without regard to age, ability or bodily health to complete a certain course in a certain time, but there ought to be one that says a certain work must be complete before attempting anything higher. Should there be pupils, who from any cause, cannot take the course prescribed, let them do part of the work at once and consume a longer time in this preparation. A teacher can make it appear to a class and to a scholar and parent that it is wise to do so; show them how "the battle is not always to the strong nor the race to the swift," and so make them happy and contented in believing the true adage to be, "not how much but how well." In every class there may be scholars who are brighter than the majority and able to comprehend the lessons allotted from day to day and have time to spare.

To such a wise selection of reading, matters would be of untold value. A general taste for good reading fostered in our schools would soon cripple those firms who send about their immoral story literature.—*The Moderator.*

BAD LIGHT FOR THE EYES.

After a thorough examination of all the class-rooms in every section of the city of Philadelphia, it was discovered that in only 200 out of 2109 rooms in the public school buildings of the thirty-one sections are pupils properly seated. In his report to the Board upon this important subject, Supt. McAlister says:—

It has been ascertained that a considerable number of the seats are so placed that the light falls directly upon the eyes of the pupils. The injurious effects of this are so well established that no word of comment is needed. The accompanying table contains a detailed statement of the position of the desks in every class room in the public schools in the city, except the Boys' High School and the Girls' Normal School. It will be seen from it that in 378 rooms the desks and seats are so placed that all the light received by the pupils comes from the windows directly in front of them. In 422 rooms the light comes partly from the front and partly from the right or left side. Pupils cannot sit in such positions for the length of time required of them without permanent injury to their eyesight. In only 202 rooms out of a total of 2109 are the pupils placed in accordance with the requirements of hygienic science.

In the same connection, Mr. A. M. Spangler, of the Philadelphia Board of Education, after examining seventy-six of the public schools of the city, says, in the extended report of his investigations, that 14 per cent. of the girls and 8½ per cent. of the boys in the secondary schools are near-sighted, while in the primary schools 8 per cent. of the girls and 5 per cent. of the boys are afflicted in the same manner. The causes of the infirmity are set forth at great length in this report. In 95 per cent. of the schools visited the seating is wretchedly bad. He found in the front room children shielding their eyes with slates and books and desk lids from the glare that came through the blindless windows. Where this was prevented by shades or newspapers pinned up, a dim twilight pervaded these rooms. In the rear rooms the gas had to be lighted. Another cause of the prevalence of myopia is the location of blackboards. In the schools examined all the boards in front of the children are hung between two windows, "and as a consequence," says Mr. Spangler, "a knowledge of what is written on them can only be learned by a straining of the eyes that can not be otherwise that hurtful in the extreme." The remainder of the boards are hung on one side, necessitating a change of position whenever the children must consult them. In 95 per cent. of the school-rooms Mr. Spangler found the only means of ventilation to be by opening doors and windows. The result of these investigations should set teachers and school officers to thinking, and to making intelligent inquiry and observation, in all parts of the State.

HOW FAR SHALL I HELP THE PUPIL?

BY D. P. PAGE.

It is always a very difficult question for the teacher to settle, "How far shall I help the pupil, and how far shall the pupil be required to help himself?" The teaching of nature would seem to indicate that the pupil should be taught mainly to depend on his own resources. This, too, I think, is the teaching of common sense. Whatever is learned should be so thoroughly learned that the next and higher step may be comparatively easy. And the teacher should always enquire when he is about to dismiss one subject, whether the class understands it so well that they can go on to the next. He may, indeed, sometimes give a word of suggestion during the preparation of a lesson, and by a seasonable hint save the scholar the needless loss of much time.

But it is a very great evil if the pupils acquire the habit of running to the teacher as soon as a slight difficulty presents itself to request him to remove it. Some teachers, when this happens, will send the scholar to his seat with a reproof, perhaps, while others,